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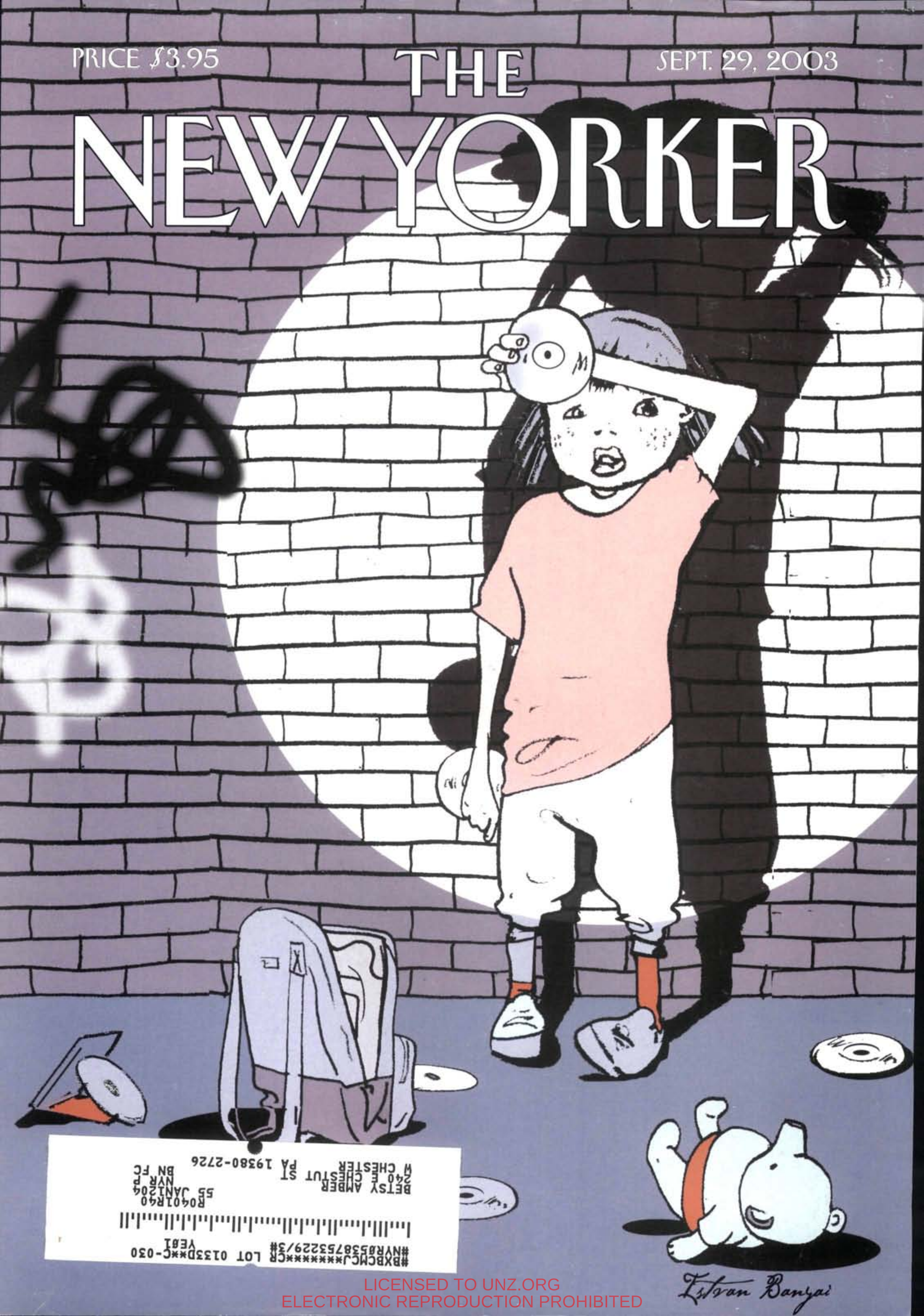

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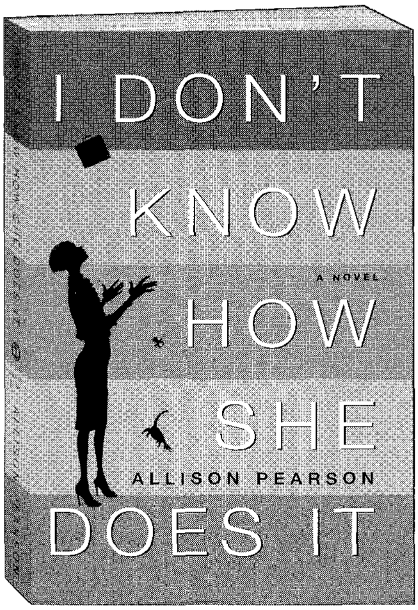
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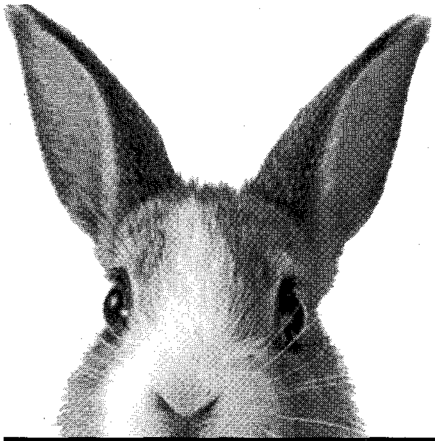

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Hendrik Hertzberg ("Strongman," p. 42), a senior editor, first wrote for the magazine in 1969. He has served as a White House speechwriter and as editor of *The New Republic.*

Jerome Groopman ("The Bionic Eye," p. 50) is the Recanati Professor of Medicine at Harvard. His new book, "The Anatomy of Hope: How People Prevail in the Face of Illness," will be published in January.

Alec Wilkinson (The Talk of the Town, p. 40) is the author of "My Mentor: A Young Man's Friendship with William Maxwell" and "Mr. Apology," a collection of essays, which comes out next month.

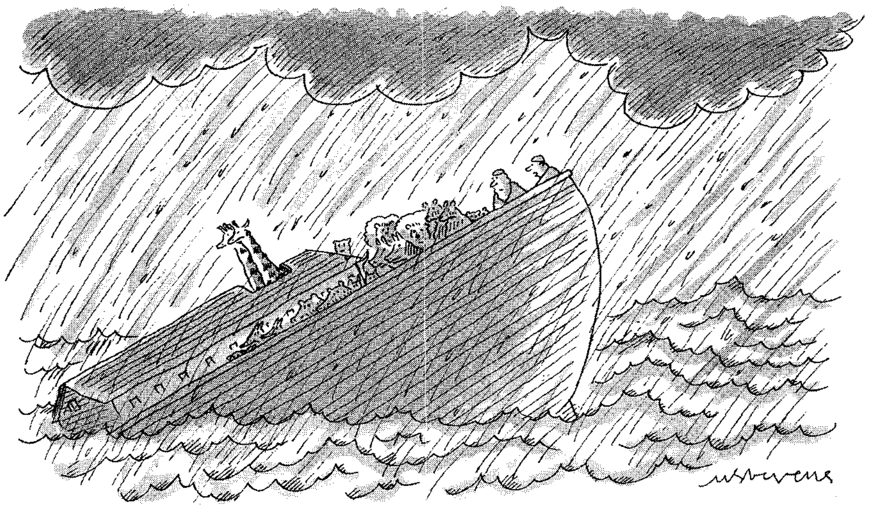
Jane Mayhall (Poem, p. 67) will publish a new collection of poems, "Sleeping Late on Judgment Day," in February.

Calvin Trillin ("Newshound," p. 70) is a longtime staff writer and the author, most recently, of "Feeding a Yen."

Alma Guillermoprieto ("A Hundred Women," p. 82) has a new book, "Dancing in Cuba: A Memoir of the Revolution," coming out in February.

Isaac Bashevis Singer (Fiction, p. 94 ), an émigré from Warsaw who wrote primarily in Yiddish, died in 1991. He was the recipient of the 1978 Nobel Prize in Literature. Many of his stories ran in the magazine between 1967 and 1986, and this one, which was published in Israel in 1975, appears here in English for the first time.

Stephen Kotkin (Books, p. 102) teaches European and Asian history at Princeton, where he also directs the Russian Studies program. ♦



*"I knew the woodpeckers were a mistake."*

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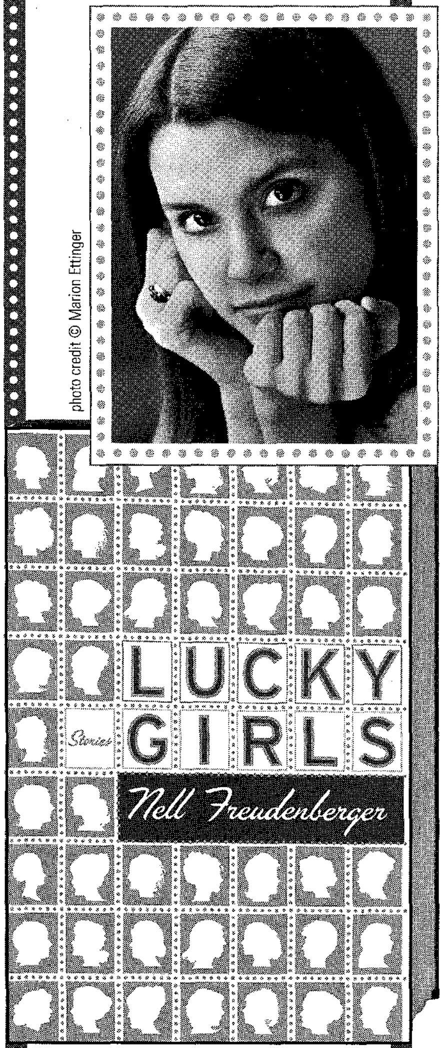

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# THE MAIL

## THE CHURCH IN AMERICA

Louis Menand, in his thoughtful Comment on the battle over displaying the Ten Commandments in a court in Alabama, gives Thomas Jefferson credit for introducing the metaphor of "a wall of separation" between church and state into American political discourse, in 1802 (The Talk of the Town, September 8th). Jefferson was, as it happens, drawing on an earlier tradition. In 1643, Roger Williams, a clergyman and founder of Rhode Island, who had been banished from the Puritan Colonies for challenging theocratic authorities, wrote that there should be "a wall of separation between the garden of the Church and the wilderness of the world"—by which he meant the predations of sectarian political leaders. The difference between the two is that, while Williams felt the wall necessary to protect the church from the state, for Jefferson the greater need was to protect the state from the church.

*Lloyd Burton*
*Professor of Law and Public Policy*
*University of Colorado*
*Denver, Colorado*

## ARTISTS ON STRIKE

Adam Gopnik views the strike this summer by unevenly employed French performing-arts workers with something like despair and a little bit of contempt ("The Anti-Anti-Americans," September 1st). Unemployment benefits for interim arts workers are indeed generous by American standards. Right now, it takes only three months of work in a year to qualify, although the sums involved are modest. But they provide a safety net for some hundred thousand artists and technicians in film, theatre, dance, and the circus, allowing them to work with a modicum of serenity and continuity; to accept artistically challenging engagements that are poorly paid; to work in the schools; and to bring the arts to poor areas. The question isn't so much why France is so generous with its artists but why the United States is so reticent about financing the arts. That the arts workers' willingness to fight for such benefits should be so disparaged by Gopnik is extraordinary. Is Richard Grasso's take-home pay a more brilliant example of the Good Society?

*Paul Golub*
*Meudon, France*

## THE WATER RACKET

In "City of Water," David Grann refers to the city's eighteenth-century private water carters as "racketeers . . . gouging customers" (September 1st). This is not fair to the storied Teawater Men, who provided the only clean and reliable spring water in New York for fifty years, at a time when the city's wells, the only other supply, were dangerously polluted. Grann does not mention the real racketeer in New York's early water history: the Manhattan Company, Aaron Burr's bank disguised as a water business, which effectively had monopoly powers. The company, which was an ancestor of JPMorganChase, provided intermittent doses of horrid water from a reservoir on Chambers Street, while thwarting improvements during the first four decades of the nineteenth century, when the city grew infamous for epidemic disease and epic filth.

*Gerard Koeppel*
*New York City*

CORRECTIONS: A Talk of the Town story in the September 15th issue stated that the Yankees won the pennant in 1984. In fact, the team had no pennant victories between 1981 and 1996.

The Book Currents column in the September 22nd issue conflated two Robert Shapiros: a former defender of O. J. Simpson and a former C.E.O. of Monsanto. They are not one and the same.

•

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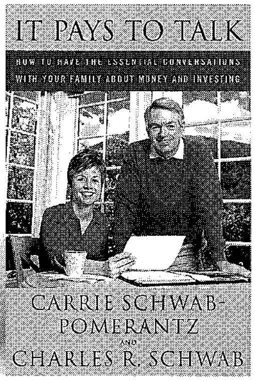
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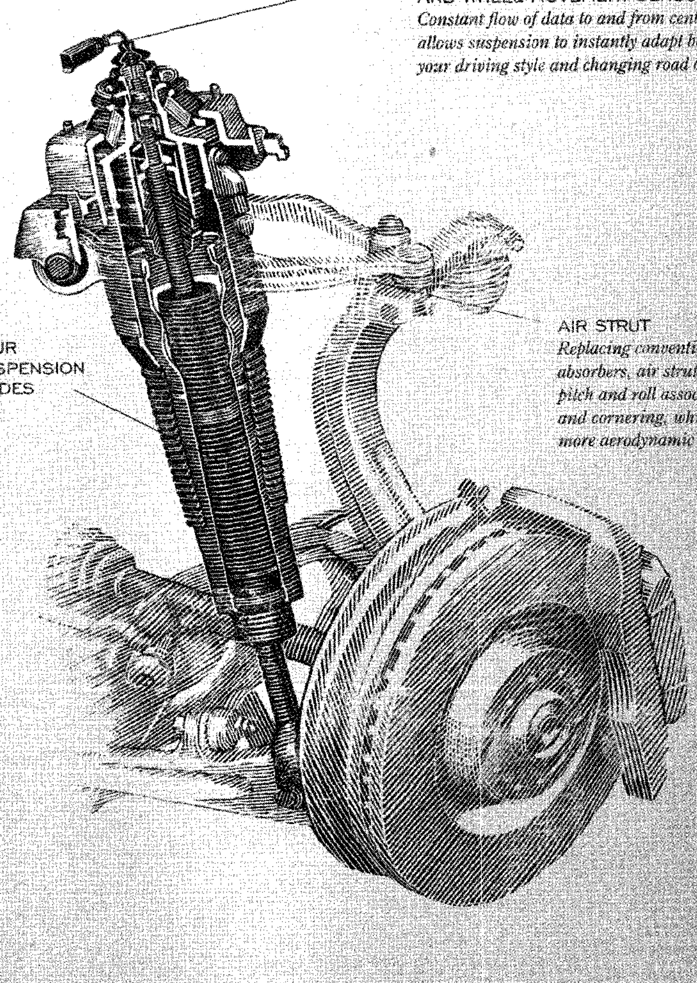

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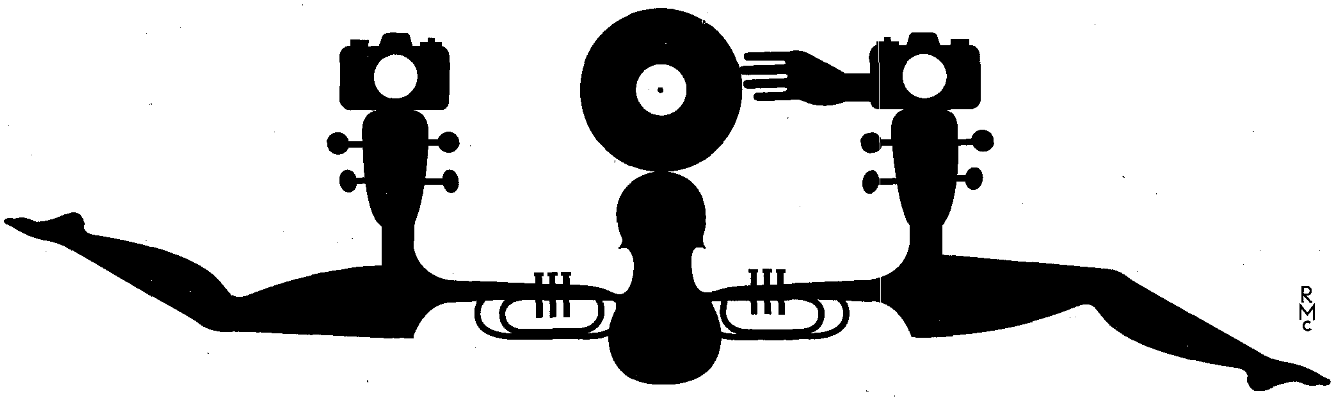

## THE THEATRE
## OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

*Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.*

**BECKETT/ALBEE**
Marian Seldes and Brian Murray perform an evening of one-act plays by Samuel Beckett and Edward Albee (a combination not seen on the New York stage since 1960), including Beckett's "Not I," "Footfalls," and "A Piece of Monologue" and Albee's "Counting the Ways." Lawrence Sacharow directs. In previews. (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE BOY FROM OZ**
The movie star Hugh Jackman stars in a new musical about the life and times of the Australian pop star Peter Allen, in which Stephanie Block plays Liza Minnelli and Beth Fowler plays Allen's mother. Directed by Philip Wm. McKinley and choreographed by Joey McKneely, with a book by Martin Sherman ("Bent") and music and lyrics by Allen and others. In previews. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

**COOKIN'**
Four Korean cooks scramble to create a seven-course wedding banquet in one hour, in a comic theatrical import from Seoul that blends martial arts, Samulnori drumming, and dance. Previews begin Sept. 25. Opens Sept. 28 at 5. (New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

**CUPID AND PSYCHE**
Barrett Foa and Deborah Lew star in a new musical based on the myth of the beautiful mortal woman who won the love of an immortal. With a book and lyrics by Sean Hartley and music by Jihwan Kim. Choreographed by Devanand Janki. Directed by Timothy Childs. In previews. Opens Sept. 24 at 8. (John Houseman Studio, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-868-4444.)

**GOOD MORNING, BILL**
Keen Company presents the New York première of a 1927 romantic comedy by P. G. Wodehouse that does not involve Jeeves. Directed by Carl Forsman. In previews. Opens Sept. 25 at 8. (Connelly, 220 E. 4th St. 212-868-4444.)

**LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**
The musical about a bloodthirsty extraterrestrial plant and the wimpy florist who becomes its slave gets a Broadway revival. Directed by Jerry Zaks. In previews. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200.)

**LIVING OUT**
Second Stage begins its twenty-fifth season with the New York première of a play by Lisa Loomer about a Los Angeles couple who get embroiled in nanny troubles, starring Kathryn Meisle as the Anglo mother and Zilah Mendoza as the El Salvadoran nanny. Directed by Jo Bonney. In previews. Opens Sept. 30 at 7. (307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

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**THE NIGHT HERON**
Chris Bauer stars in a new play by Jez Butterworth about two best friends who invite a mysterious boarder to live with them in their ramshackle house on the edge of the Fens. Directed by Neil Pepe. In previews. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

**OMNIUM GATHERUM**
Theresa Rebeck and Alexandra Gersten-Vassilaros bring their critically acclaimed dinner-party-à-clef play to New York from Louisville, where it had its première last spring. Kristine Nielsen leads a cast of "celebrity" guests, playing their hostess—a woman who has a famous cooking show and heads a home-design empire. Directed by Will Frears. In previews. Opens Sept. 25 at 7. (Variety Arts, 110 Third Ave. 212-239-6200.)

**RECENT TRAGIC EVENTS**
Playwrights Horizons begins its season with a new play by Craig Wright that stars Heather Graham, in her New York stage début, as a Midwestern ad exec who goes through with a blind date the day after 9/11. With Kalimi A. Baxter, Hamish Linklater, Jesse J. Perez, and Colleen Werthmann. Directed by Michael John Garcés. In previews. Opens Sept. 28 at 7. (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

**ROUNDING THIRD**
John Rando directs a new comedy by Richard Dresser about two warring Little League coaches with drastically different ideas about winning, losing, and how to play the game. In previews. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

**TOUCH**
Tom Everett Scott plays an astronomer recovering from his wife's murder in a play by Toni Press-Coffman, directed by Loretta Greco. Previews begin Sept. 30. (Women's Project, 424 W. 55th St. 212-239-6200.)

**WAXING WEST**
The Lark Theatre presents a comic play by the Romanian playwright Saviana Stanescu about a mail-order bride who exchanges the confused surroundings of post-Ceausescu Romania for the confused surroundings of post-9/11 America. Sept. 25-30. (939 Eighth Ave., between 55th and 56th Sts. 212-246-2676, ext. 22.)

## OPENED RECENTLY

**ANNA BELLA EEMA**
This fable, set in a trailer park at the end of the world, tells the story of Irene, a mother who yearns to be a wolf; her prodigiously ironical daughter, Anna Bella; and Anna Bella Eema, the girl Anna Bella fashions out of mud as a friend and a link with the wider world. Irene, who licks stamps for a living, is both a xenophobe and an agoraphobe, but her ten-year-old daughter yearns to think outside the trailer—which she does during the course of this quirky, original show. Written by Lisa D'Amour. Katie Pearl directs. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-868-4444. Through Oct. 4.)

**AVENUE Q**
This musical puppet-and-people show has much to recommend it: an exceptionally gifted cast, a strong book by Jeff Whitty, equally strong music and lyrics by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx, and the splendid direction of Jason Moore. Humans act alongside cloth co-stars—such as Princeton, a bright-eyed college grad, and two girls who want to date him, a kindergarten teacher's aide named Kate Monster and a lounge singer called Lucy T. Slut (both performed by the great Stephanie D'Abruzzo). Is it possible to be attracted to a puppet? D'Abruzzo gives Lucy so much verve that when she saunters offstage in D'Abruzzo's hand—all the puppets are handheld—you want to follow her with wolf whistles. (Reviewed in our issue of 8/11/03.) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

**BERKSHIRE VILLAGE IDIOT**
On the sparest of sets—a barrel with water in it, some auto-supply-shop tires, and a fish tank—and with only himself as the cast, Michael Isaac Connor conjures a whole community of macho men, scrappy kids, and sad wives in a small Massachusetts town. Friends and relations ripple out from the central, stony relationship between a vulnerable boy and his emotionally remote father—a man who went to war to avoid the (for him) more agonizing duties of being an on-call father and husband. With his quick, nervous movements, shy muscularity, intense gaze, and excellent gift for mimicry, Connor creates a working-class "Ice Storm": a work whose emotional impact sinks in slowly and lingers. Directed by Barry Edelstein. (Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. 212-239-6200.)

**BOLD GIRLS**
Rona Munro's play depicts a day in the lives of four women struggling through life with absent men, too little money, and too much violence. Often wrenching, it's just as often funny. And Munro occasionally allows her characters an almost novelistic luxury with language, especially in the play's few monologues; this makes the play seem universal even while

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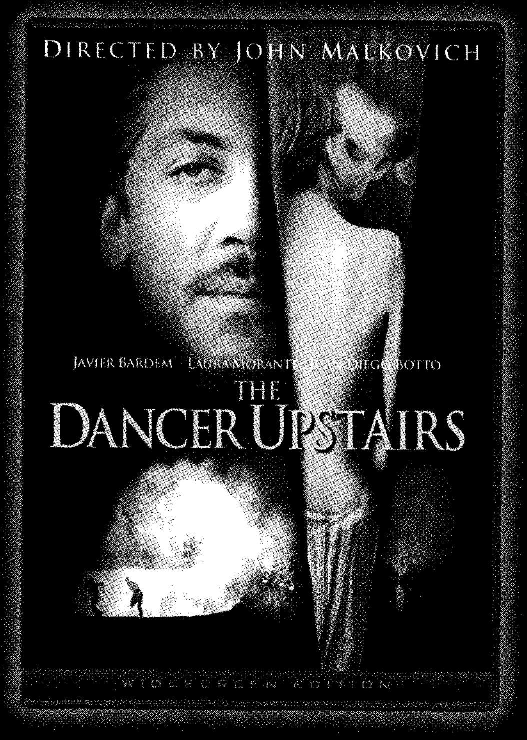
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it's also utterly real and firmly set in nineteen-nineties Belfast. Ludovica Villar-Hauser, who directs, has a sure hand with emotion and with stage business; the cast of four are strong individually and even better as an ensemble. Once again, 29th St. Rep has succeeded in creating thought-provoking theatre out of tough emotions. (212 W. 29th St. 212-868-4444.)

**CELLOPHANE**
Mac Wellman turns his ironic scrutiny on the spiritual history of America, describing the country's moral complexion through fractured, poetic speech. Directed by Jim Simpson. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-226-2407.)

**CHEKHOV'S RIFLE**
The Lord Strange Troupe presents the première of a dark comedy by Alex Ladd about a playwright, his actor roommate, and a stolen script, starring Austin Pendleton and Jess Osuna. Directed by Nolan Haims. (Greenwich Street Theatre, 547 Greenwich St., near Spring St. 212-868-4444.)

**CHOCOLATE IN HEAT: GROWING UP ARAB IN AMERICA**
The young Palestinian-American playwright Betty Shamieh and the actor Piter Fattouche portray the experiences of young Arab-Americans and their friends and enemies in five funny and poetic monologues, building a cast of characters that includes college girls, a Jordanian prince, a shrewd Latina prostitute (well played by the versatile Fattouche), and an illiterate high-school dance coach given to such inscrutable aphorisms as "You got to learn to fly before you learn to slither." Directed by Sam Gold. (The Tank, 432 W. 42nd St. 212-868-4444. Closes Sept. 27.)

**FAR AND WIDE**
In Jonathan Bank's deft adaptation of Arthur Schnitzler's cruelly blithe 1911 drama about civilized infidelity, the characters let their hearts go out to play and receive them back badly bruised. The production, directed by Bank, has returned to the Mint after a successful run last spring. (311 W. 43rd St. 212-279-4200.)

**FLOW**
Will Power meshes the concrete poetics of the old school with the freestyle charge of the new in his solo portrayal of an urban neighborhood where storytelling, in the griot tradition, is the only thing that can't be killed off. Directed by Danny Hoch. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE HARLEQUIN STUDIES**
The Signature Theatre Company kicks off its year-long Bill Irwin festival with a play that uses acrobatics and live music to explore the many sides of the commedia-dell'arte character. The playwright leads the cast and also directs. With original music by Doug Skinner, sets by Doug Stein, costumes by Catherine Zuber, and lights by James Vermeulen. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

**A LIE OF THE MIND**
In the White Horse Theatre Company's revival of Sam Shepard's 1985 hit, the action begins with jarring urgency as Beth (Jessica Baron) regains consciousness after a brutal beating by her impetuous, selectively amnesiac husband, Jake (Rod Sweitzer). The attack leaves Beth brain-damaged, and for the rest of the play she speaks haltingly but still manages to reveal elemental insights in poetic aphorisms. It's heavy material, but the cast shoulders it well; the supporting actors do a fine job playing Beth's backwoods family, and Sweitzer ably puts across Jake's zombielike fixation on events in his past. However, perhaps inevitably, spending three hours sharing this family's weighty burdens proves not a little exhausting. Directed by Cyndy A. Marion. (Sargent, 314 W. 54th St. 212-868-4444. Closes Sept. 28.)

**MATT & BEN**
This is one not to miss. In addition to being short—just over an hour—it's goofy, funny, and improbably believable. In captivating performances, Mindy Kaling (a compact Indian-American woman in a tracksuit) and Brenda Withers (a lanky Wasp in khakis and a rumpled button-down) play Ben (Affleck) and Matt (Damon), best friends from the Cambridge Rindge & Latin School, who are holed up in 1997 in a filthy apartment, squabbling as they try to write a script. When the complete screenplay to "Good Will Hunting" literally drops from the ceiling, they are both floored and their friendship is tested. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-477-5288.)

**NAMEDROPPING**
David Rothenberg's one-man show about his fifty years in the theatre is more of a loose, charming evening of conversation than a structured production, which makes his tales of working with Bette Davis and John Gielgud (among many other stars) all the more delightfully intimate. In addition to the dish, Rothenberg serves up anecdotes about how, every once in a while, a well-dropped name can change a person's life—imparting them on the sly, without weighing the evening down. (Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231.)

**OUR LADY OF SLIGO**

reer dissolved by drink, marital troubles, and tax difficulties. Written and directed by one of his countrymen, Mark Jenkins, and performed at the Irish Repertory Theatre. (132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737. Closes Sept. 28.)

**PORTRAITS, A CANVAS OF LIFE STORIES**
A new play by Jonathan Bell pays tribute to the victims and survivors of 9/11 with a collage of stories about people connected to the tragedy, with a cast that includes Roberta Maxwell, Anjali Bhimani, Victor Slezak, Charles Keating, Matte Osian, and Dana Reeve. Directed by Mark Pinter. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 212-308-0700.)

*Takashi Murakami's installation "Reversed Double Helix," at Rockefeller Center.*

ROBERT POLIDORI

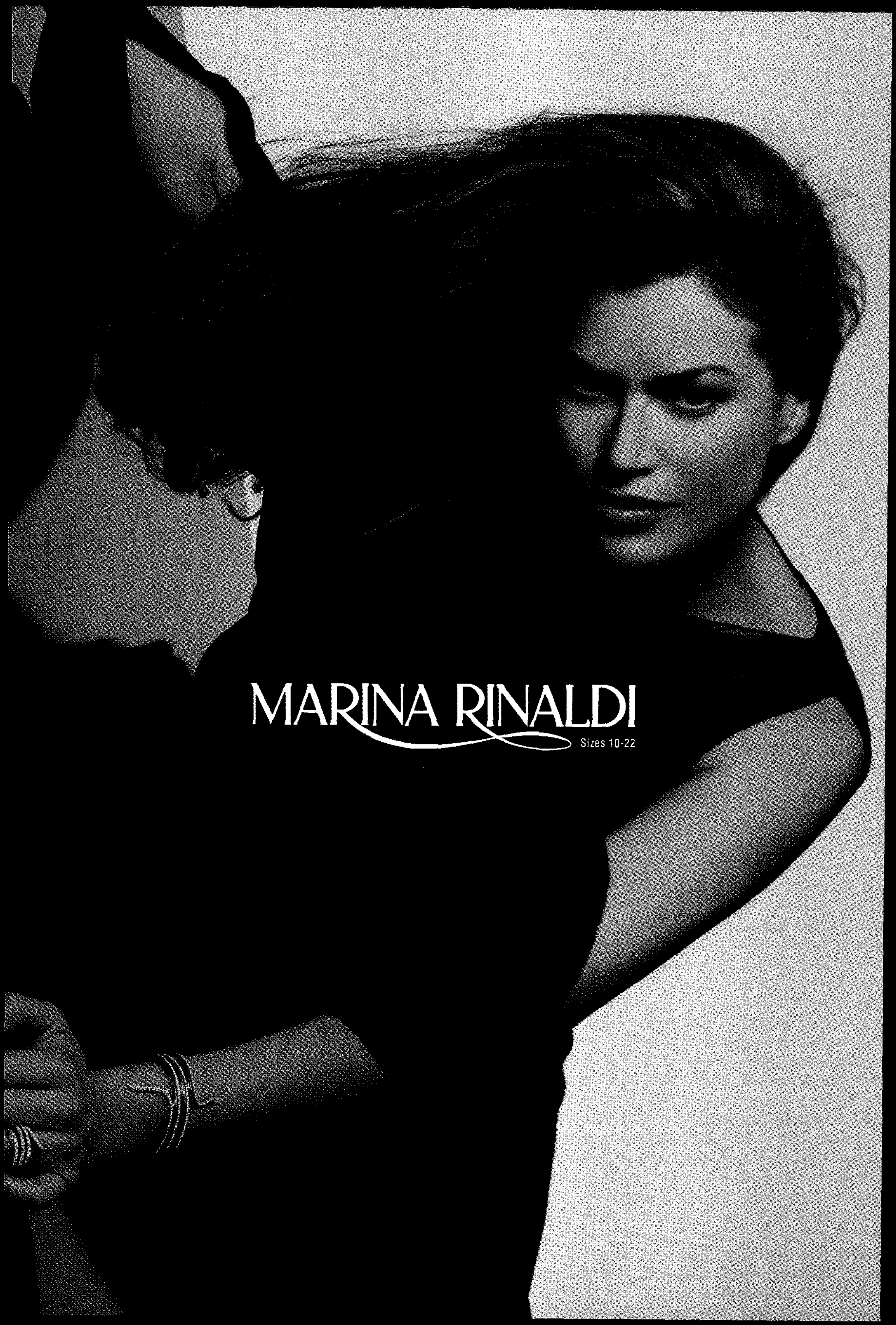
**THE NUCLEAR FAMILY**
This high-spirited downtown show is basically an improv act in which three men juggle family roles and wigs, accompanied by a pianist who uses wisecracking arpeggio flourishes and pop-music samples to underscore comic bits as they evanesce. The result of their frenzied collaboration feels like an episode of "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" in which the straight guy never shows up and the fab hosts do makeovers on each other instead. Jimmy Bennett, John Gregorio, and Stephan Guarino star; Matt Cohen mans the piano. (Zipper's Belt Theatre, 336 W. 37th St. 212-239-6200.)

**PLAYING BURTON**
The Richard Burton look-alike Brian Mallon gives a sympathetic and spirited portrayal of the romantic Welsh actor who overcame his hardscrabble background to win renown on stage and screen and to woo Elizabeth Taylor, but died at fifty-eight, his ca-

**REPERTORIO ESPAÑOL**
The Spanish-language repertory company presents an ever-shifting selection of dramas and comedies, which includes, at the moment, "La Gringa," "The Feast of the Goat," "Happily Mad," and "Quemar las Naves." (Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 212-889-2850.)

**THE RIVALS**
Lydia Languish and Mrs. Malaprop return to the stage in the Pearl Theatre Company's season opener, a revival of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's ebullient drawing-room comedy. Directed by Robert Neff Williams. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

**A ROOSTER IN THE HENHOUSE**
A one-man play written by and starring John O'Hern addresses the plight of stay-at-home dads. Directed by Mark S. Graham. (Lion, 412 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)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**THE THING ABOUT MEN**
Doris Dörrie's ruefully resigned comedy of modern immorality, "Men," has become an uproarious musical—with exuberant songs about workaholism, betrayal, and compromise, performed by a cast with nimble comic timing. When the cheating ad man Tom (Marc Kudisch, who nails the "lovable jerk" character and also has a great baritone) finds out that his wife (Leah Hocking) is having an affair, he hunts down her lover, Sebastian (the dreamy tenor Ron Bohmer), and moves in with him (incognito). Jimmy Roberts' music buoyantly carries Joe DiPietro's excellent book and lyrics, and some of the best tunes ("Highway of Your Heart," "Me, Too") go to the mischievous Daniel Reichard and Jennifer Simard, who perform multiple characters. Directed by Mark Clements, with musical staging by Rob Ashford. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

**THE THREEPENNY OPERA**
In a neatly executed but not spectacular new production at the Jean Cocteau Rep, the director, David Fuller stresses the beggarliness of Brecht's famous characters; the poor beg to become beggars, a bride begs to be loved, and even Mack the Knife (played by Chad A. Suitts), who should be stealing sympathies, constantly solicits them instead. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 212-677-0060.)

**TRUMBO**
In 1947, the House Un-American Activities Committee accused Dalton Trumbo—the screenwriter for such movies as "Spartacus" and "Roman Holiday"—of Communist leanings, and during the next thirteen years he was banned from working in his chosen field. In his son Christopher Trumbo's moving and evocative stage portrait of him, based on letters Trumbo wrote to his family, friends, and enemies, a rotating roster of stars takes the lead role, reading Trumbo's letters, and Gordon MacDonald plays Christopher, providing the narration that binds them together. Directed by Peter Askin. (9/15/03) (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.)

## DANCE

**MOMIX**
Critics may yawn, but crowds go wild over the trancelike, humorous, and erotic illusions of Moses Pendleton's corps; indeed, the company is one of the few thriving for-profit dance companies in the U.S. The season includes several evening-length pieces, all of them repertory, and each structured as a series of vignettes on a theme. In the popular 1994 piece "Baseball," whose tenth anniversary is being marked this year by a countrywide tour, dancers pay tribute to the national pastime as they move to music by James Brown, Queen, Ali Farka Toure, and others; in the nineteen-part desert saga "Opus Cactus," a mostly New Age score accompanies dancers who imitate blooming saguaro cacti, birds, and a gila monster; and in "Passion," Peter Gabriel's sensual score for the film "The Last Temptation of Christ" provides a musical backdrop to the dance as a video montage that ranges from Chinese tombs to childbirth to Renaissance paintings flashes across a scrim. (Eighth Ave. at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Sept. 24-26 and Sept. 30 at 8, Sept. 27 at 2 and 8, and Sept. 28 at 2 and 7:30. Through Oct. 12.)

**BALLETT FRANKFURT**
In his final season as the Ballett's artistic director—after which the company will cease to exist—William Forsythe presents a no-frills program of four dances that display the dancers' astounding technique and his own prolific invention. The dances recall Balanchine's "leotard" ballets in their spare approach to costuming: they also dispense with the text, projections, and other multimedia theatrics that characterized Forsythe's previous BAM programs. Although twenty identical metal tables do get pushed quickly onstage in the piece "One Flat Thing, Reproduced," the tables recede the instant the dancers begin to climb, slide, and wiggle, becoming frames that set off the company's ferocious, gleaming movement. For this piece, Thom Willems creates a cyclonic roar of noise, but for the other three the only accompaniment to the dancers' twirling, rippling, and interlocking is intermittent wisps of piano music or electronic sound and the dancers' own audible breaths. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Sept. 30 at 7:30. Through Oct. 4.)

**PATRICK CORBIN AND DANCERS**
A new dance company takes the stage, headed by the former Paul Taylor dancer Patrick Corbin, who introduces his troupe with an evening of premières. Corbin performs two solos: "Take Flight," set to the Prelude from Bach's Suite for Solo Cello No. 1 in G Major, and "Putting All the Pieces Right," with live accompaniment by the vocalist Tyieé. A new duet, "Forever," is performed by Michael Trusnovec and Julie Tice, set to music by Arvo Pärt and Dvořák; and twenty women perform the ensemble piece ". . . of the . . . ," a creation tale set to an original score by Marsha Groathe. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. Sept. 25-28 at 8:30.)

**VON USSAR DANCEWORKS**
The Slovenian choreographer Astrid von Ussar presents a program of new and repertory work, which includes the company premières "And Nothing But the Truth" and "My Ineffable Heart—a Dialog" and a rare collaboration with the veteran Alvin Ailey dancers Derrick Minter, Troy O'Neil Powell, and Nasha Thomas-Schmitt called "Three Ways to Love." (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. 917-545-1999. Sept. 27-28 at 8.)

**ART UNION HUMANSCAPE**
It would be limiting to describe a company as polymorphous as this one as a duo. For years the dancer Ayako Kato, an adept practitioner of modern dance, ballet, Noh, Tai Chi, the traditional Japanese tea ceremony, and ikebana, has collaborated with the bassist and improvised-music composer Jason Roebke in performances that "present the space of being in the moment through spontaneous interdisciplinary exploration." In two evenings of dance, music, and deliberate stillness, the pair is joined by the percussion artist Tim Barnes. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. Sept. 26-27 at 8.)

**"WORKS & PROCESS"**
The American Ballet Theatre Studio Company performs Antony Tudor's "Continuo," the A.B.T. principal Amanda McKerrow and the former soloist John Gardner perform the adagio from "The Leaves Are Fading," and Donald Mahler rehearses dancers in a scene from "Pillar of Fire" (coming up in A.B.T.'s fall season) as part of the Guggenheim's "Works & Process" series. Also, the former A.B.T. principal dancer Susan Jaffe leads a discussion on Tudor's influence on the company's early development. (Peter B. Lewis Theatre, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. 212-423-3587. Sept. 28-29 at 8.)

**"(NOB)ODYSSEY'S"**
In Homer's Odyssey, when Polyphemos, the Cyclops who's holding Odysseus captive, asks his prisoner to identify himself, Odysseus answers that his name is Nobody, a trick that helps him escape. Similar wordplay drives director Iannis Michaloudis' dance-theatre interpretation of the adventure. The title pun (the show is pronounced "nobody sees") is only one example of the director's "obsessive exploration of the use of parentheses." Words treated as images ("wor(l)d-images") are flashed on surfaces, such as the mask worn by an androgynous Homer ("a (wo)man") or the screen representing the monster. (Not even the director's name is safe; it appears in the program as Michalou(di)s.) The hero, the Cyclops, and the poet converse in Greek, French, and English while Odysseus' twelve companions stretch out a single Lycra costume and a lovely actress incarnates the Eternal Woman. Choreographed by Harry Mavromichalis. (La Mama Annex, 74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. Sept. 25-27 at 7:30 and Sept. 28 at 2:30 and 7:30. Through Oct. 8.)

**"BODY BLEND"**
Sara Juli and Alexx Shilling curate a dance series of mixed media featuring work by Teresa How-

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AND: A calendar of *New Yorker*
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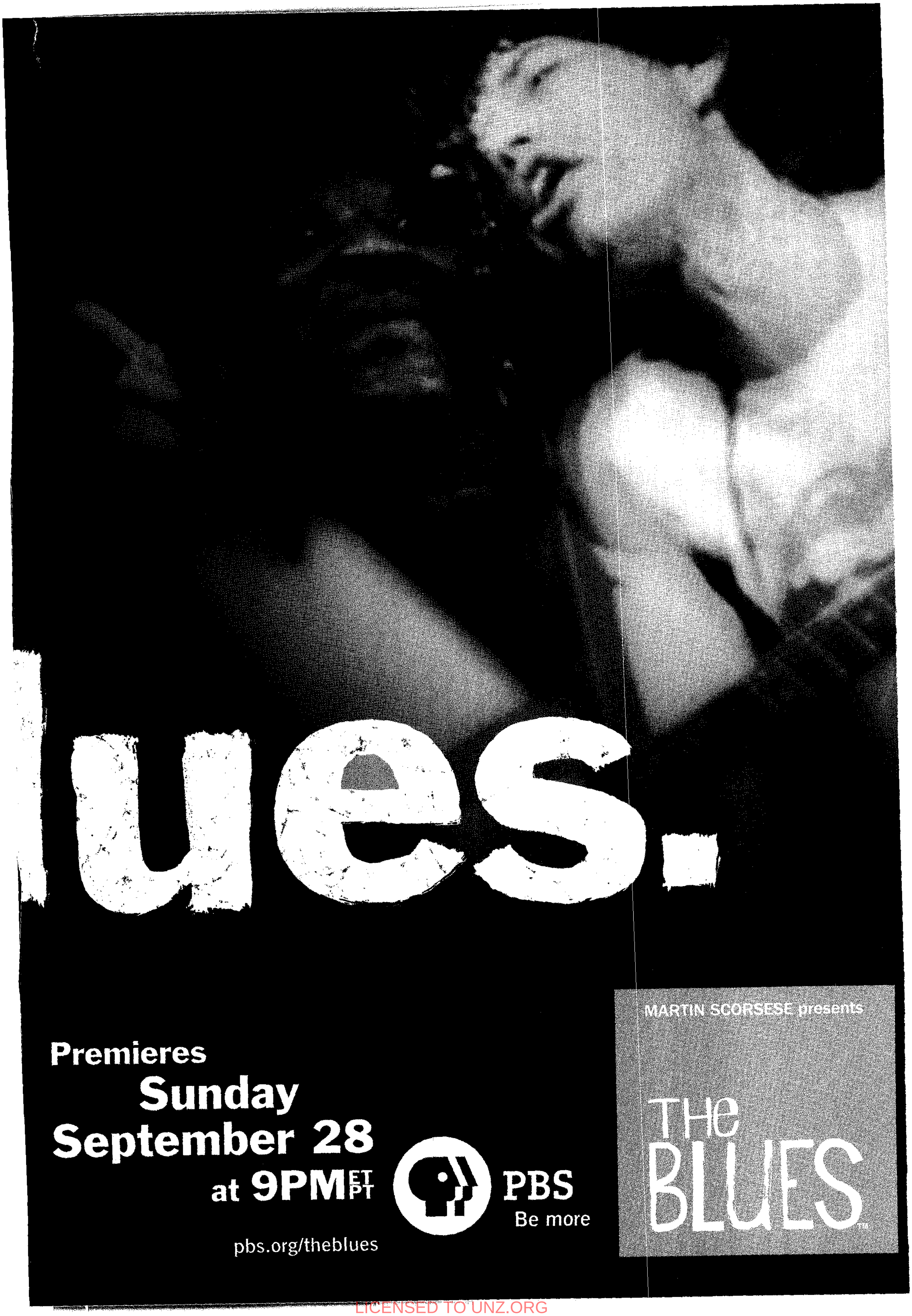

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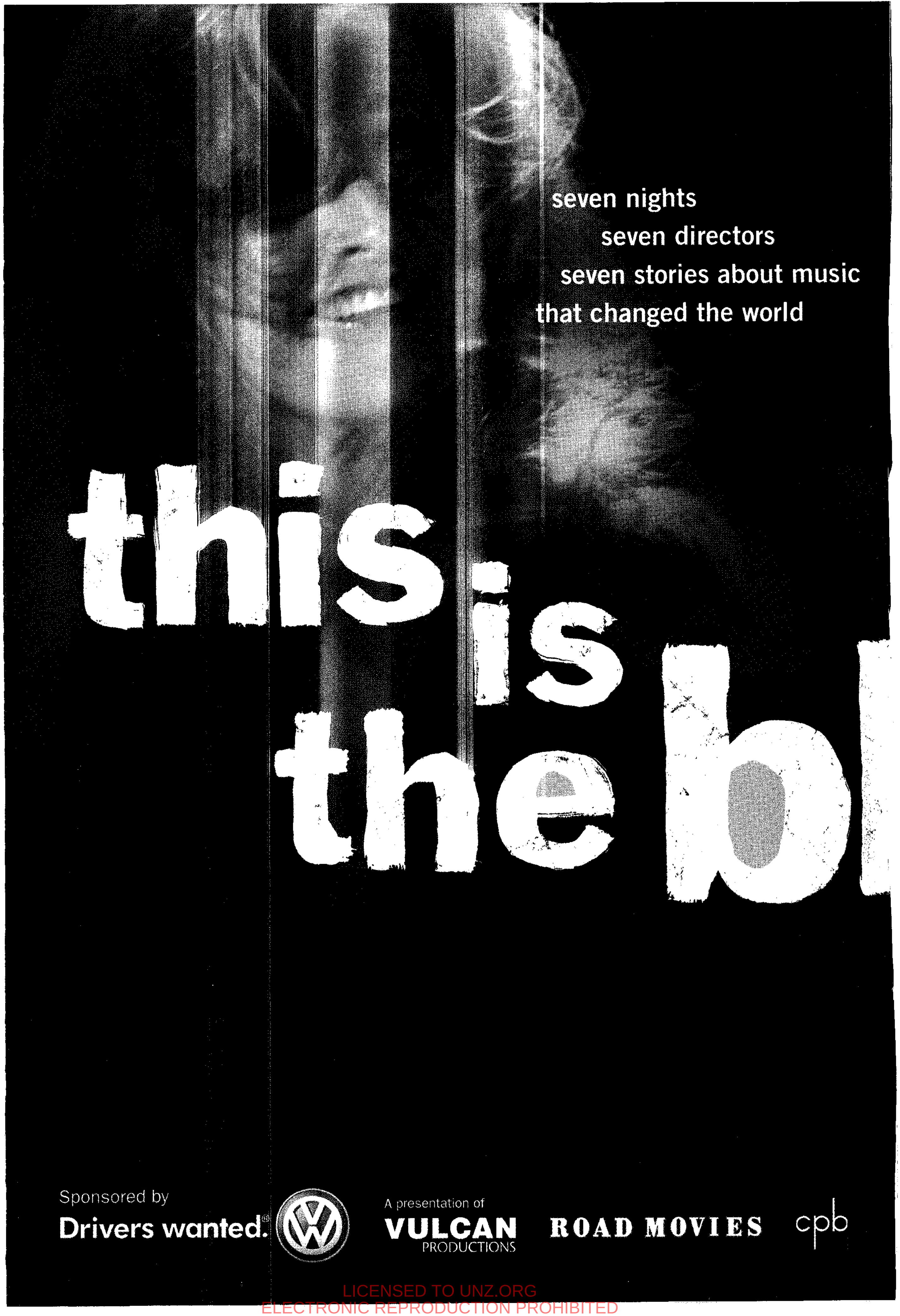

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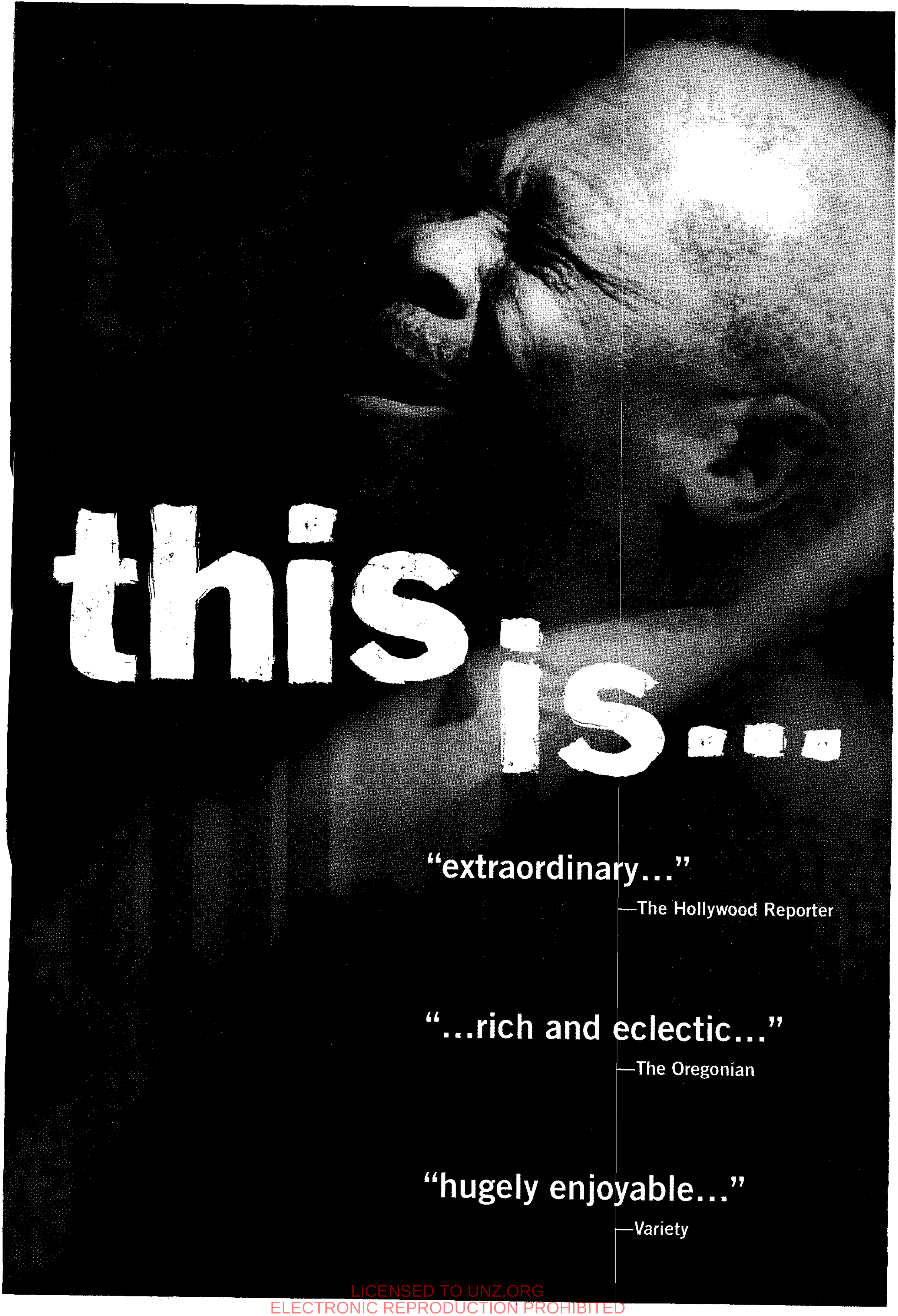
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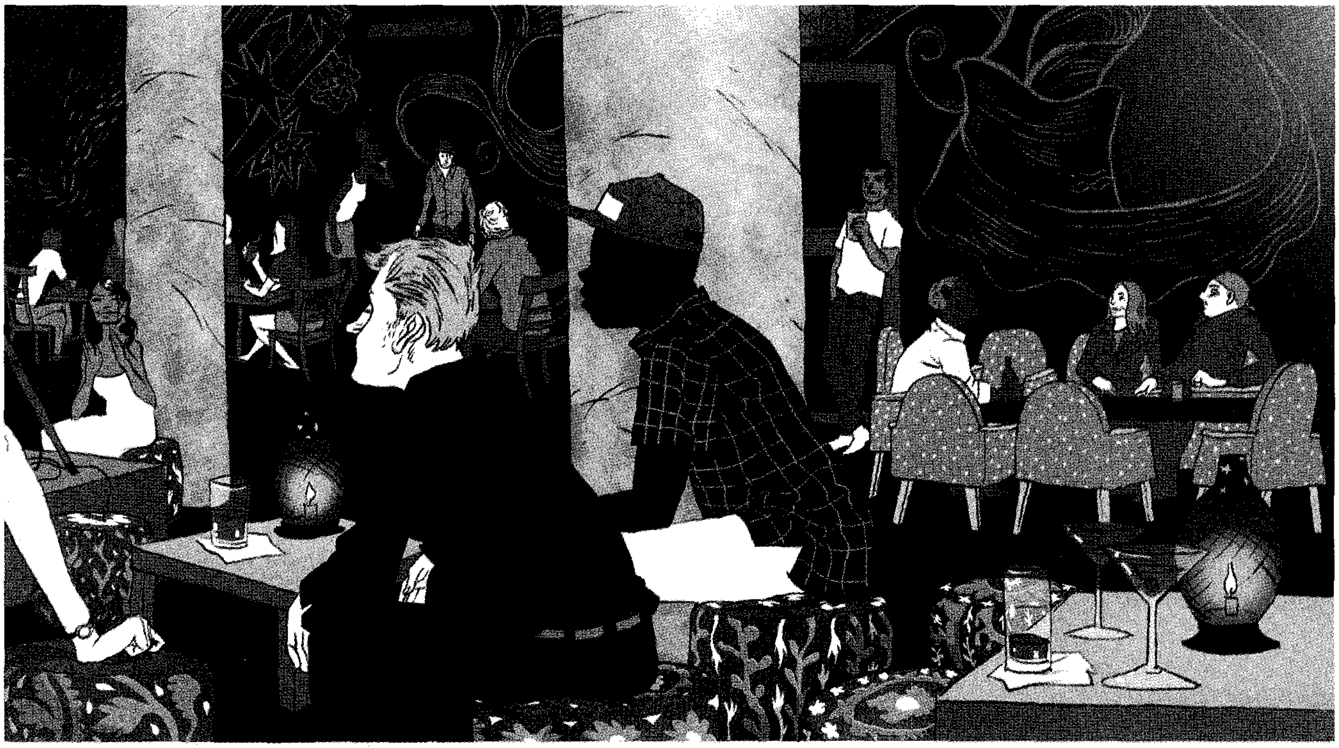
ard, Susanna Kim, Notario Dance Company, and Aynsley Vandenbroucke. (University Settlement, 184 Eldridge St. 212-219-0736. Sept. 29 at 8.)

**"DANCE CONVERSATIONS"**

The Flea Theatre inaugurates a free monthly series of performances of works in progress, which are followed by a discussion with the artists moderated by the downtown dancer Neta Pulvermacher. The first evening includes work by the choreographers Ann Liv Young, Daria Fain, Millicent M. Johnnie, Jeremy Laverdure, and Arthur Avilas. (41 White St. For information, call 212-226-2407. No tickets necessary. Sept 30 at 7.)



*Satalla, a new Chelsea night club devoted to world music, has a Day-Glo aesthetic and an ambitious, globe-trotting booking policy.*

TOMER HANUKA

# NIGHT LIFE

## CONCERTS

**PETER FRAMPTON**

Back in the seventies, the fresh-faced British guitarist rode to stardom on the strength of a double album, 1976's "Frampton Comes Alive." Perhaps nothing could top that record's collection of huge pop hooks, feel-good ballads, and silly "talk box" guitar effects, and Frampton's career had nowhere to go but down. And down it went, thanks in part to a few vocational missteps, including, most notably, an appearance in the colossal cinematic flop "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." More recently, Frampton has become a tireless fixture on the live circuit, and he just released "Now," a new studio album of stadium-ready rock. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 212-840-2824. Sept. 25 at 8.)

**WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE**

A night of *dhrupad* music from Northern India with Wasifuddin Dagar. (Thalia Theatre, Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. For more information, call 212-545-7536. Sept. 25 at 8.)

**ZANKEL HALL**

This new venue beneath Carnegie Hall continues its opening festival with **Dianne Reeves** on Sept. 25 at 8:30. Her newly released collection of standards, "A Little Moonlight," is the singer's most recent attempt at a breakthrough. Accompanied by an attentive trio, this persuasive stylist should be at her best. Sept. 27 at 8:30: **Bill Frisell** and the Intercontinentals. Frisell's latest world-music-inspired project is many things, and jazz isn't one of them. The Intercontinentals have other things on their mind; their Afro-Brazilian-Middle Eastern mix allows the inventive guitarist to successfully shed his old identity once again, if just for a while. Sept. 28 at 8:30: **Randy Newman,** the master of ironic pop miniatures. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800.)

**"SINGERS OVER MANHATTAN"**

Jazz at Lincoln Center presents **Lucky Peterson** and **Carla Cook.** What the neo-blues singer and instrumentalist Peterson and the jazz vocalist Cook have in common, besides talent deserving of wider recognition, will presumably be revealed in this intimate and inviting venue. (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, Lincoln Center. 212-721-6500. Sept. 25-27 at 8.)

**STAIND**

Representing the introspective strain of nü metal, this New England foursome ditches the more aggressive tactics of its peers for maudlin dirges loaded with melancholy and self-pity. Staind even titled its latest album "14 Shades of Grey," though it's not clear whether or not this was a botched attempt at irony. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 212-307-7171. Sept. 30 at 6:45.)

## CLUBS

*Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.*

**BOTTOM LINE**

15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (212-228-6300)—Sept. 30: The legendary songwriter **Chip Taylor** (his credits include "Wild Thing" and "Angel of the Morning") and the talented young fiddler and singer **Carrie Rodriguez** are back with a new collection, "The Trouble with Humans."

**BOWERY BALLROOM**

6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Sept. 25: Intent on ditching the one-hit-wonder albatross hanging around their necks following "Popular," their 1996 paean to high-school social etiquette, the members of the local alternative-pop trio **Nada Surf** recently released their third album, "Let Go," a noteworthy collection of dreamy pop songs and pulse-raising rockers. With the backcountry ballads of **Maplewood.** Sept. 30: Though the **Reverend Horton Heat** is often lumped in with the punk and heavy-metal bands he tours with, the Texan faux-preacher plays a whip-smart, irreverent brand of ferocious rockabilly that leaves both Mohawk-topped rebels and hirsute metalheads in the dust. The Rev's accomplished guitar theatrics and perpetually bawdy sensibility make him a legendary live act.

**IRVING PLAZA**

17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Sept. 24-27: The swirling guitars of Idaho's **Built to Spill.**

**JOE'S PUB**

425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Sept. 24: **Susheela Raman,** a sensuous London-born vocalist of Indian descent. Sept. 27: The fiercely independent neo-folkie **Michelle Shocked.** Sept. 28: **They Might Be Giants** add tuba, trombone, and trumpet to the mix as they break out new arrangements of old favorites.

**NORTHSIX**

66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103)—Sept. 26: The downtown aesthetes **Les Savy Fav** traffic in murky, guitar-based rock with angry-young-man leanings. Sept. 27: The sparkling guitar combo **Luna**—local favorites and indie-pop near-royalty—return to Brooklyn following the lead singer Dean Wareham's and the bassist Britta Phillips's recent side projects.

**RODEO BAR**

375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (212-683-6500)—Sept. 26: Renowned for energetic live shows that pair the fevered soul of vintage R. & B. with the mania of frenzied rock and roll, **Barrence Whitfield & the Savages** may not be a household name, but they play like seasoned champions who have nothing to lose.

**SATALLA**

37 W. 26th St. (212-576-1155)—The brainchild of Michael Yaacobi, a fifty-two-year-old former civil engineer from Israel, this new world-music venue is decorated in expanded-consciousness style: the simple space's chief feature is neon-bright pseudo-psychedelic murals that shine with a Technicolor intensity, thanks to black lights, which also cause the waitresses' white tank tops, patrons' sneakers, and the club's drink menu to glow as well. The name Satalla, according to Yaacobi, is Arabic-derived Israeli slang meaning "high on life." Satalla the club aims to expand the musical consciousness of its patrons by bringing in top acts from around the globe—booked for the coming months are such headliners as the South African vocalists the Mahotella Queens, the Malian *kora* master Mamadou Diabate, and the Moroccan singer Hassan Hakmoun. Sept. 25:

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Fantcha, a native of the windswept archipelago Cape Verde who now lives in Brooklyn, learned the intricacies of *morna,* the sweet and sad songs of her homeland, from the great singer Cesaria Evora. On her two United States releases, "Criolinha" and "Viva Mindelo," Fantcha spices up her earthy island blues with *coladeiras* (faster-paced *mornas*) and such Afro-Brazilian touches as samba rhythms.

## JAZZ AND STANDARDS

**ALGONQUIN HOTEL**
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through Sept. 27: The vocalist **Stacey Kent.** Dining.

**BIRDLAND**
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Sept. 26-27: Even when he was a sixties free-jazz tenor provocateur, **Archie Shepp** would acknowledge the jazz tradition by occasionally luxuriating in, say, a lusty Ben Webster tribute or recharging an Ellington tune. These days Shepp has no qualms about embracing the music in all its diversity; his new quintet features two hard-bop stalwarts: the pianist **John Hicks** and the drummer **Charli Persip.** Dining.

**BLUE NOTE**
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through Sept. 28: The pianist **Eddie Palmieri,** one of the founding fathers of modern Latin music.

**CARLYLE HOTEL**
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters and wraparound murals. Starting Sept. 23, the English actress and singer **Maria Friedman** makes her U.S. début. On opening night **Stephen Sondheim** and **Barbara Cook** will also be on hand.

**FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY**
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Sept. 23-27: A member of the popular touring group known as the Irish Tenors, **Ronan Tynan** is also a physician and an award-winning athlete, despite the fact that both his legs were amputated when he was twenty. A spirited performer, he can be expected to imbue the evening with generous positivity.

**IRIDIUM**
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Through Sept. 28: The pianist, singer, and composer **Mose Allison's** songs drip with caustic wit, and his eccentric keyboard work mixes rural blues with strains of Bud Powell, Bela Bartok, and Jimmy Yancey. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

**JAZZ GALLERY**
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—Sept. 26-27: **Guillermo Klein's** Los Gauchos, a contemporary big band with contemporary ideas, employs some of New York's most stimulating new jazz players, including the saxophonists **Chris Cheek** and **Bill McHenry,** to bring the Argentine composer's expansive work to life.

**JAZZ STANDARD**
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Sept. 25-26: The Broadway star **Lillias White** still hasn't worked out all the kinks in her jazz act, but she has the vocal equipment and stage charisma to get her through. Sept. 27-28: **Charles Tolliver** dropped off the scene for more than a decade after initial fame in the seventies; now the trumpeter is back. His newly formed big band will bring together old associates including the pianist **Stanley Cowell** and the saxophonist **Gary Bartz** along with younger players eager to soak up experience from the vets. Dining.

**JOE'S PUB**
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Sept. 29-30: Don't hate **Boz Scaggs** because Rod Stewart and other aging arena habitués have muddied his chosen path. "But Beautiful," the silky-smooth soft rocker's foray into the world of the Great American Songbook, is a low-key charmer that should come across well in this cabaretlike room.

**SWEET RHYTHM**
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—Sept. 24-27: The **Three Altos.** The idea is simplicity itself: put three crackerjack alto saxophonists—Gary Bartz, Sonny Fortune, and Vincent Herring—together with a stiletto-sharp rhythm section—Ronnie Mathews, piano, Cecil McBee, bass, and Billy Hart—and slap on a cute name. If a little blood is spilled after this cutting contest, don't say you weren't warned.

**VILLAGE VANGUARD**
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through Sept. 28: The peripatetic saxophonist **Joe Lovano's** nonet ropes together some of the city's best mainstream players for a project that, as captured on "On This Day: At the Vanguard" ventures outside of its orchestrated bop purview with invigorating results. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

## ART
## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**METROPOLITAN MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—**"The Responsive Eye"** surveys Native American art from 3000 B.C. forward; the earliest museum endorsements came somewhere in the early nineteen-hundreds, when items began appearing in natural-history and anthropology displays. By the middle of

## TABLES FOR TWO

**LEVER HOUSE RESTAURANT**
390 Park Ave., at 53rd St. (212-888-2700)—The Kubrickian light in this grand windowless pod on the ground floor of Lever House, the landmark International Style glass-and-steel office tower that changed the face of Park Avenue, tricks you into thinking that everyone is someone. That dignified old fellow in the next banquette—isn't that Buckminster Fuller? And what about the woman who stops by his table to say, "I *love* your offices"? Ayn Rand? It turns out that he's just another hedge-fund magnate. Still, the sense remains that this strange, gorgeous room could be a chamber in heaven designed for deceased futurists. There aren't many right angles: the walls are concave, a giant sliding parallelogram-shaped window separates the private dining room from the main space, and the principal motif—repeated on the carpet, the ceiling, the mirrors, the wine racks—is a web of hexagons.

If the décor is S.S. Discovery meets Honeycomb Hideout, the scene is Korova Milk Bar meets Michael's. The waiters and bus staff are exceedingly attentive—they have a habit of rearranging the things on your table each time they come by with something new—and above all, they seem to want you to stay hydrated. The saucer of walnut-and-roasted-garlic spread that comes with the bread is tasty enough to get commandeered by one diner after another, until its proper place is restored by the waiter upon his return.

The chef, Dan Silverman, who previously worked at Union Square Café and Alison on Dominick, is a greenmarket guy, and it shows in the little things, such as the salad of fava beans, arugula, and Pecorino that accompanies the rack of lamb, or the fried-okra salad with its escort of yellow and green Romano beans. Silverman also does some clever but clean accessorizing at the raw bar—for instance, the little specks of spring onion and the hint of orange on the puck of fluke tartare. Lobster may generally be for tourists, but the grilled lobster tails, with corn, wax beans, and cherry tomatoes, are transfigured by a sweet, cinnamony seasoning—what Silverman calls, half-seriously, "a proprietary blend of spices." Among the many inventive desserts, there's something called a dome: a hemisphere of chocolate crème fraîche and chopped cashews. Though not geodesic, it is out of this world. (Open weekdays for lunch and dinner and weekends for dinner. Entrées $24-$42.)

—*Nick Paumgarten*

the twentieth century, pieces were making their way into art museums, and curators and collectors like Ralph T. Coe (who was both) took serious interest. Coe amassed the tremendous inventory here, promised to the museum. A surprising amount of it was made for the tourist trade, including a card case, a doll-house chair, and a pair of very pointy little moccasins. Among the pieces that are free of this sort of influence are a pair of headdress frontlets from the Pacific Northwest and several carved masks including an arrestingly long-beaked ceremonial number whose large, caricatured features look like they could have had some influence on the colonizers—their cartoonists in particular. Through Dec. 14. ◆ On May 16, 1703, the six-foot-eight-inch tsar Peter the Great stood in a swamp beside the Neva River and proclaimed it the site for a new city that would take his name and earn the sobriquet "the Venice of the North." For **"Celebrating St. Petersburg,"** the Met raided its collection to mark the tricentennial of imperial Russia's capital city, and the small exhibition is a dazzler, stuffed with German silver, Sèvres porcelain, and snuffboxes encrusted with gold, enamel, ivory, and jewels from the reign of Catherine the Great (1762-96), an era aptly dubbed the "Age of Diamonds." Through Jan. 25. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)**
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—To mark the centenary of the birth of Ansel Adams (1902-84), the museum presents more than a hundred photographs, including some unexpected choices, by the scrupulous Western artist. Through Nov. 3. ◆ The museum's succinct Max Beckmann retrospective tests the artist's long-pending claim to parity with the modern masters of Paris. The curator Robert Storr's trenchant selection and airy hanging make a winning case. How does one look at art that is laden with elusive, often quite lugubrious portent? The show's answer: as painting. Beckmann does all the work: our role is to be bowled over. Through Sept. 29. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

**GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"From Picasso to Pollock"** revives a tried-and-true Guggenheim custom: installing highlights from the permanent collection. The result is a satisfying, albeit familiar parade of modernist styles and masterworks, from Miró and Brancusi down at ground level to de Kooning, Rothko, et al. up in the empyrean. Along the way, the show digresses, like a helplessly enthusiastic collector, to offer a mini-retrospective of watercolors by Wassily Kandinsky. The show ranges from his early scrambled seascapes to late biomorphic abstractions, neatly encapsulating a great, eccentric career. To visitors from Chelsea, Kandinsky's trippy, spin-cycle compositions may suggest links to contemporary talents like Julie Mehretu and Steve Di Benedetto. Through Sept. 28. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

**WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—We've seen a lot of him lately, but **"Ellsworth Kelly: Red Green Blue"** is the kind of spare, smart show that can perk up even satiated appetites. Organized by Toby Kamps at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, the exhibition focusses on a group of eight large paintings made between 1958 and 1965. The continuity of color choices (it's the same red, the same green, the same blue every time) puts the focus on simple changes in scale and shape and offers a kind of Rothko Chapel-like immersion in Kelly's elemental hedonism. There are a few rooms of supplementary material—sketches, prints, and a new canvas in the same palette—but at its heart the show really boils down to just two rooms, three colors, and one sleek vibe. Through Nov. 2. ◆ In **"The American Effect,"** forty-seven artists and filmmakers react to the myths and policies of the United States. Through Oct. 12. ◆ For sheer joy in materials, no one can compete with Sarah Sze. Binder clips, bright-blue Windex bottles, fake grass, PVC pipe, drinking straws, orange string—put it all together in the Whitney's moatlike sunken courtyard and you've got **"The Triple Point of Water."** This refers to the solid, liquid, and gaseous states of $H_2O$, and it's an ethereal title, but the elaborate installation is a marvel, a delicate, multilevel habitat, a miniature city or ecosystem animated by little fans and burbling aquariums. Through Oct. 9. (Open Wednesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

**JEWISH MUSEUM**
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—When Magdalena Carmen Frieda Kahlo y Calderón was a child in the suburbs of Mexico City, her German Jewish father pulled her out of the convent her Spanish and Indian mother had chosen and sent her to a German school. Years later, when Kahlo learned that her alma mater had begun distributing Nazi-produced genealogical charts and encouraging the *kinder* to document their racial purity, she put her concern into her work, using the same three-generation family tree to document her own mestiza and Sephardic roots. This small, pointed exhibit, **"Frida Kahlo's Intimate Family Picture,"** investigates that image and a few others for covert symbols of her Jewish lineage. Through Jan. 4. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45; Thursdays, 11 to 8; and Fridays, 11 to 3.)

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

*Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.*

**TAKASHI MURAKAMI**
The Japanese sculptor, who has created and cleverly marketed a cartoon universe of his own *anime*-like characters, brings two giant balloons, one thirty-foot Mr. Pointy sculpture, a series of toadstool settees, and a circle of candy-colored flags to brighten up the plaza at Rockefeller Center. The artist's mixture of commercial, traditional, and ironic influences (Hello Kitty, Mickey Mouse, Andy Warhol, nineteenth-century Japanese painting) is a nice fit for the tourist landmark: at once cool and not too challenging, like Conan or Letterman. Through Oct. 12. (Presented by Target Stores and the Public Art Fund. 212-980-4675.)

**JENNIFER REEVES**
Reeves showcases her alternately sassy and plaintive blend of cartooning, text, and abstraction in a double feature at Ramis Barquet's two locations. Most of the new paintings feature a little tower of multicolored blobs, a sort of Play-Doh primate who stands in landscapes furnished with stone walls and the occasional fern or tree. Despite Reeves's perky preschool palette, the effect is pastoral, mock-wistful, and sometimes genuinely desolate. Elsewhere, in paintings that feature printed texts, Reeves is back to her old barbs, offering wiseacre remarks like "I want you to ripen my pussywillow with your narcissism." Through Oct. 10. (41 E. 57th St. and 532 W. 24th St. 212-675-3421.)

### *Short List*

**JUDY PFAFF**
Ameringer Yohe, 20 W. 57th St. 212-445-0051. Through Oct. 11.

## GALLERIES—CHELSEA

**JANINE ANTONI**
A grandiose work usually signals a pitfall for Antoni's sort of installation artist. Two nine-foot steel reels, ballasted with heaps of lead ingots, are propped on inclined planes twenty-four feet apart; a mountainous snarl of fluffy hemp filament (four thousand pounds of it, the gallery says) lies between them. The hemp converges into heavy rope that circles one reel, then stretches to the other (Antoni walked this line at the show's opening), becoming a rope ladder in the process before devolving back into the tangle. What is being narrated? It's nearly impossible to care. The work's two registers—brute materiality and nebulous symbolism—abort each other. Through Oct. 25. (Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 212-206-9100.)

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**BARNABY FURNAS**
The thirty-some watercolors in this follow-up to Furnas's impressive 2002 début are smaller and mostly better than their predecessors. A chaotic, shrieky picture of a mob saluting Abraham Lincoln, his head ringed by blood-red flags and fireworks, might be the most vivid and unexpected thing currently on view in Manhattan. Whether Furnas is envisioning other Civil War-era spectacles, a rock concert, or a porn set, his splintery graphics project a kind of stylized mania: call it frenzy recollected in tranquillity. Through Oct. 4. (Boesky, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9889.)

**IAN KIAER**
These modest, low-lying arrangements of found materials (accompanied by paintings and architectural models) err on the side of the inscrutable, but they're captivating nonetheless. The objects—an umbrella without spokes, a piece of dog-eared roofing insulation, inside-out tennis balls—convey a weathered history, which is underscored by their dingy palette of asphalt black and vellum yellow. But unless viewers read the press release, they're unlikely to guess the subject of it all: architectural theories of the theatre proposed by Claude-Nicholas Ledoux in the eighteenth century and revived by Frederick Keisler in the twentieth. Hint: When contemplating those tennis balls, think theatre in the round. Through Oct. 4. (Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. 212-414-4144.)

**LEE KRASNER**
This show of late paintings by Krasner (1908-84) goes by the name "After Palingenesis." Unfortunately, the fancy word, meaning rebirth or regeneration, is dolefully apt; it's high-toned and fuzzy and so is the show. The adept and unfailingly intelligent Krasner was an eternal art student, adapting miscellaneous ideas of abstract painting and recycling the inconclusive results. The effect is high style with hiccups. She is best when frankly derivative—of Jackson Pollock's drawing style in generously open and speedy paintings of the nineteen-sixties. The show features works whose geometric designs suggest Russian Constructivism—pastiches of Rodchenko and others, with an Abstract Expressionist twist. They seem arbitrary at first but may grow on you. Krasner's forte and flaw were the same: superior, unremitting taste. Through Oct. 11. (Robert Miller, 524 W. 26th St. 212-366-4774.)

**DANICA PHELPS**
Money, the main subject of Phelps's earlier expense-account-style art works, now makes room for a more eye-catching, and no less quantifiable, topic: sex. After seven years of marriage to a man, Phelps has "fallen head over heels in love" with a woman. Their hours together, along with more banal solo activities like cooking and shopping, are documented in X-ray-style drawings, which have something of the rubbery, wrestling-match sensuality of late Francis Bacon. Phelps has decided to move into the gallery for the duration of the show, so voyeurs—er, viewers—can track Phelps's days and nights under the congenial eye of the artist herself. Through Oct. 4. (LFL, 530 W. 24th St. 212-989-7700.)

### *Short List*

**JASON RHOADES**
Zwirner, 525 W. 19th St. 212-727-2070.
Through Oct. 25.

## GALLERIES-SOHO

**ELE D'ARTAGNAN**
If Marc Chagall had made Tantric drawings, they might have resembled the jewel-toned fantasies of this self-taught Italian artist, who died in 1987, at the age of seventy-six. The artist, a sometime actor favored by Fellini, shared his director's libidinous sense of the absurd. Villages float above copulating couples, and birds perch near phalluses the size of temples; in the best pieces every spare inch of surface is covered like a crazy quilt. Despite their whimsy, the drawings have a lavish grandiosity, as if D'Artagnan (who took his nom d'art after playing a role in "The Three Musketeers") were painting murals on ceilings rather than sketching on the backs of envelopes. Through Oct. 9. (K.S. Art, 73 Leonard St. 212-219-9918.)

**KELLY HEATON**
Heaton, a latter-day Cruella De Vil, once fashioned a coat for Mrs. Claus using the skins of four hundred Furbys. For "Live Pelt," she goes one further, using both the hides and the innards of sixty-three Tickle Me Elmo dolls to create "The Surrogate," a bright-red jacket with a vibrating lining; Heaton calls it a "substitute lover." Various forms of documentation give details of the process along with an extended reflection on the fur trade. The artist will sell the trophy-mounted Elmo heads on eBay throughout the show and then auction off "The Surrogate" at the show's close. Through Oct. 11. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St. 212-226-3232.)

### *Short List*

**KRISTIN BAKER**
Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 212-343-7300.
Through Sept. 27.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

**TIM DAVIS**
In a switch from his last show in New York, in which he toyed with the effects of light on suburban landscapes, Davis now takes on the museum environment itself, photographing paintings and carefully allowing the museum's own lighting to obscure the image or highlight the painter's brushwork. Davis's best work—his takes on Richter, Vermeer, and Whistler, for example—is both smart and disorienting. At times, Davis's flash of light veering across the frame makes a familiar image come alive, and the cracks and fissures inherent to aging paint form a part of the art-historical landscape. Through Oct. 11. (Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-929-2262.)

**REAGAN LOUIE**
There are breasts and bare skin aplenty in Louie's clear-eyed, luridly colored photos of sex workers in Asia, but the over-all effect, while certainly provocative, is not titillating. Many of Louie's subjects are photographed not vamping but waiting—for customers, for diversions, for the next day or hour; they have a sort of lazy-lidded stupor that's meant to pass for languor. Together, these pictures could be mistaken for all flesh and flash, but you can feel the photographer struggling, at times, between rage and resignation. Louie is a keen visual composer: in "Couple, Hong Kong," two faceless people are locked in what appears to be the beginning or end of a kiss, though his hand, on her back, appears to be pulling her toward him, while hers, on his shoulder, seems to be pushing him away. With the cheap hotel room and ticky-tacky low-Orientalist décor, could this be anything other than what it appears? The answer seems to be no. Through Oct. 4. (Von Lintel, 555 W. 25th St. 212-242-0599.)

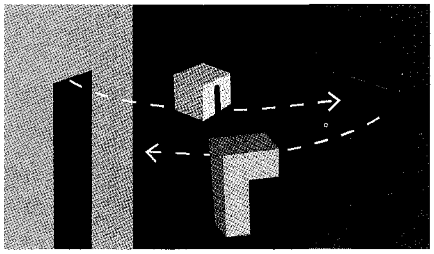
**DIDIER MASSARD**
At first glance Massard's constructed landscapes seem a bit off—plausible, but weird. In one large cibachrome print, a huge cherry tree sprouts from a small, mossy island barely large enough to contain the profusion of white blooms. In another, a giant mangrove tree looms over an algae-covered swamp like a forbidding castle's keep. Other pictures, like a shot of a Japanese pagoda seen beyond two giant trees and across a pond or an image of a waterfall that is just too perfect, bring the fact that these vistas have been hand-built in a meticulously lit studio into clear focus. Drawing equally on the traditions of Chinese scroll painting and "Star Trek," Massard briefly suspends disbelief, then extends an invitation to enjoy his perfectly crafted universe. Through Oct. 11. (Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-627-2410.)

**STEPHEN SHORE**
These handsome, restrained pictures—all but one of which date from the nineteen-seventies and were taken as part of Shore's "Uncommon Places" series—depict an America both familiar and oddly foreign, not unlike a Hollywood interpretation of the heartland. Documenting the objects and places of various American towns with the wonder and clarity of a foreign visitor not yet acclimated to his new surroundings, the pictures are flooded with incredible, big-sky light. By this point, Shore has spawned so

## BOOK CURRENTS

### *Gender Blenders*

James Boylan grew up feeling that he was a woman trapped inside a man's body; in his early forties, he chose to risk everything, including his marriage, to pursue another identity. This journey is the subject of Jennifer Finney Boylan's memoir **SHE'S NOT THERE: A LIFE IN TWO GENDERS** (Broadway). How could James—who renamed himself Jennifer—explain to his wife, Grace, and his best friend, the novelist Richard Russo, that he hadn't felt at home in his own skin? The most moving parts of the book are the e-mail exchanges with Russo that Boylan reproduces verbatim.

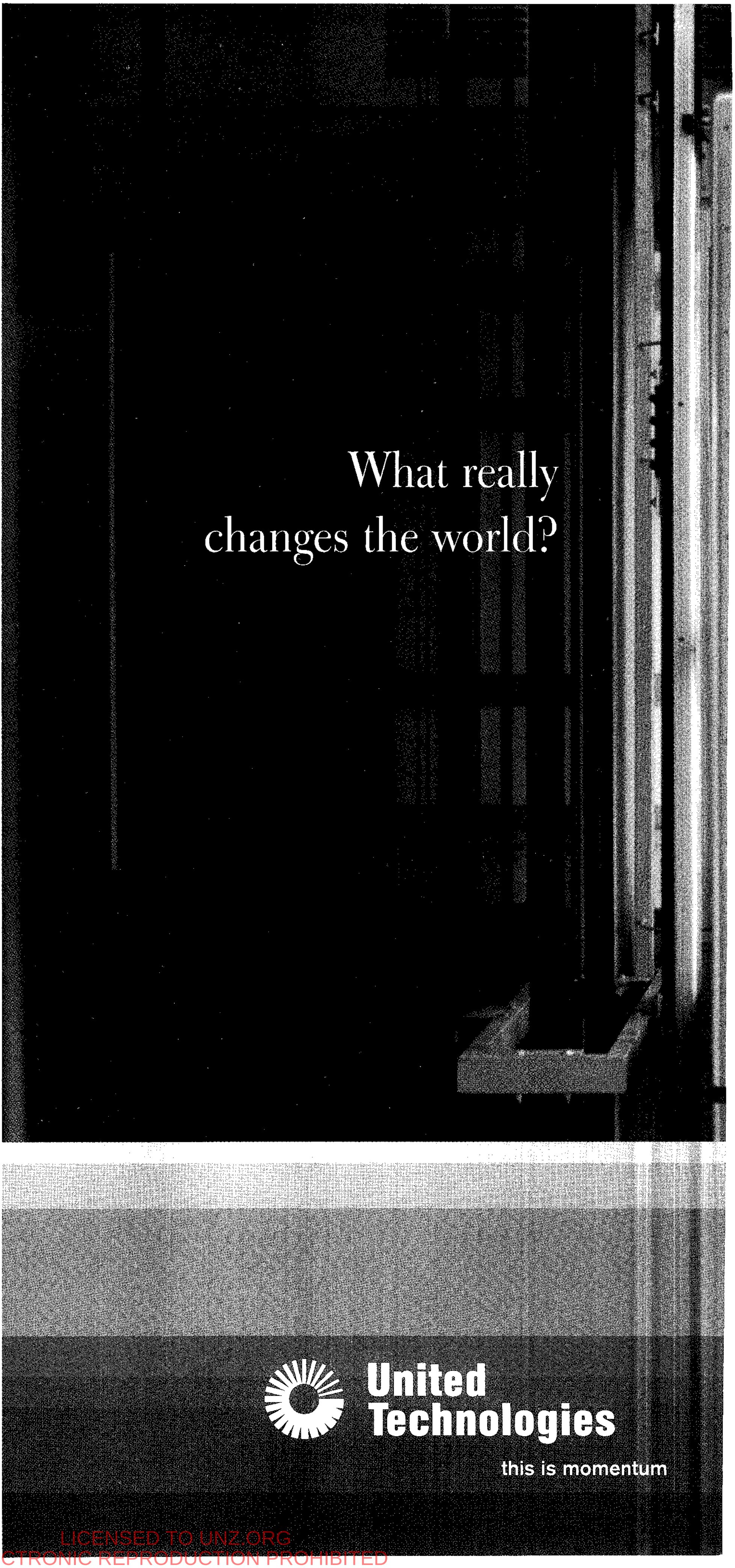


RICHARD McGUIRE

As much as Russo wants to believe his friend's account of himself, he doesn't find the character of Jenny credible: "Here, you insist, is THE REAL ME, the me I've kept a secret all these years. And yet [it] seems mannered, studied, implausible," Russo writes. Russo misses the old familiarity: now, he explains in the afterword, he guards against small slips ("he" for "she") that reveal how much he wants James back.

Noelle Howey remembers her father, Dick, as a distant presence in her childhood; he would come home, fix a drink, and retreat to his corner of the living room. So Howey feels that she gained rather than lost a parent when Dick divorced her mother and became Christine. As Christine, she was "kinder, nicer, tidier, better with children, interested in flowers and birds and chick flicks," Howey writes in **DRESS CODES: OF THREE GIRLHOODS—MY MOTHER'S, MY FATHER'S, AND MINE** (Picador). It was "like the transformation of Mr. Hyde into Miss Jekyll." Yet she wonders, "If all these wonderful traits were inside my father all along, why was gender the only means to let them out? Why wasn't loving me—or my mother—enough?"

—*Kate Taylor*



many imitators that his subjects and landscapes—thin-mouthed old people, a chipped mint-green ranch house, an empty highway under a tumbling whorl of cloud—all have the ring of the familiar, though Shore's unironic matter-of-factness is distinctly his. Particularly fine is "J.J. Summers Ajency," a Hopperesque picture of a blank storefront, its muted colors soft and velvety. There's nothing harsh or snarky about these pictures—even a TV, on its blond-wood stand, appears dignified. Through Oct. 25. (303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-255-1121.)

**JAMES WELLING**
Welling's Los Angeles appears to be one giant abandoned construction site, and the pictures—of a blinking, unmanned switchboard, a neglected amusement park—prickle with quiet anxiety. There are color photographs on display, but it's the gorgeously tactile and muted black-and-whites that really convey the city's wan emptiness, such as "Dickson," in which a stacked, cemented shelving unit disappears into dense shadow, and "Apartments, West Los Angeles," showing a stepped, stuccoed slab of apartment buildings, one white bulb struggling to light the night. Through Oct. 4. (Gorney, Bravin + Lee, 534 W. 26th St. 212-352-8372.)

### *Short List*

**PHILIP-LORCA DI CORCIA**
Pace Wildenstein, 543 W. 25th St.
212-929-7000. Through Oct. 11.

**KATY GRANNAN**
Salon 94, 12 E. 94th St. 646-672-9212.
Through Oct. 29.

## AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

**CHRISTIE'S**
Sept. 24 at 10 A.M. and 2: Prints, including works by Judd, Wood, and Warhol ("Jackie III"). ♦ Sept. 25 at 10 A.M.: A small-bore sale of Impressionist and modern art, a prelude to the more prominent November sale. ♦ Sept. 30-Oct. 1 at 10 A.M. and 2: The monthly House Sale, a selection of furniture, art works, and decorative items offered at moderate prices. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

**DOYLE**
Sept. 24 at 10 A.M.: "Belle Époque," the house's periodic sale of furniture and decorative art works from the Gilded Age. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)

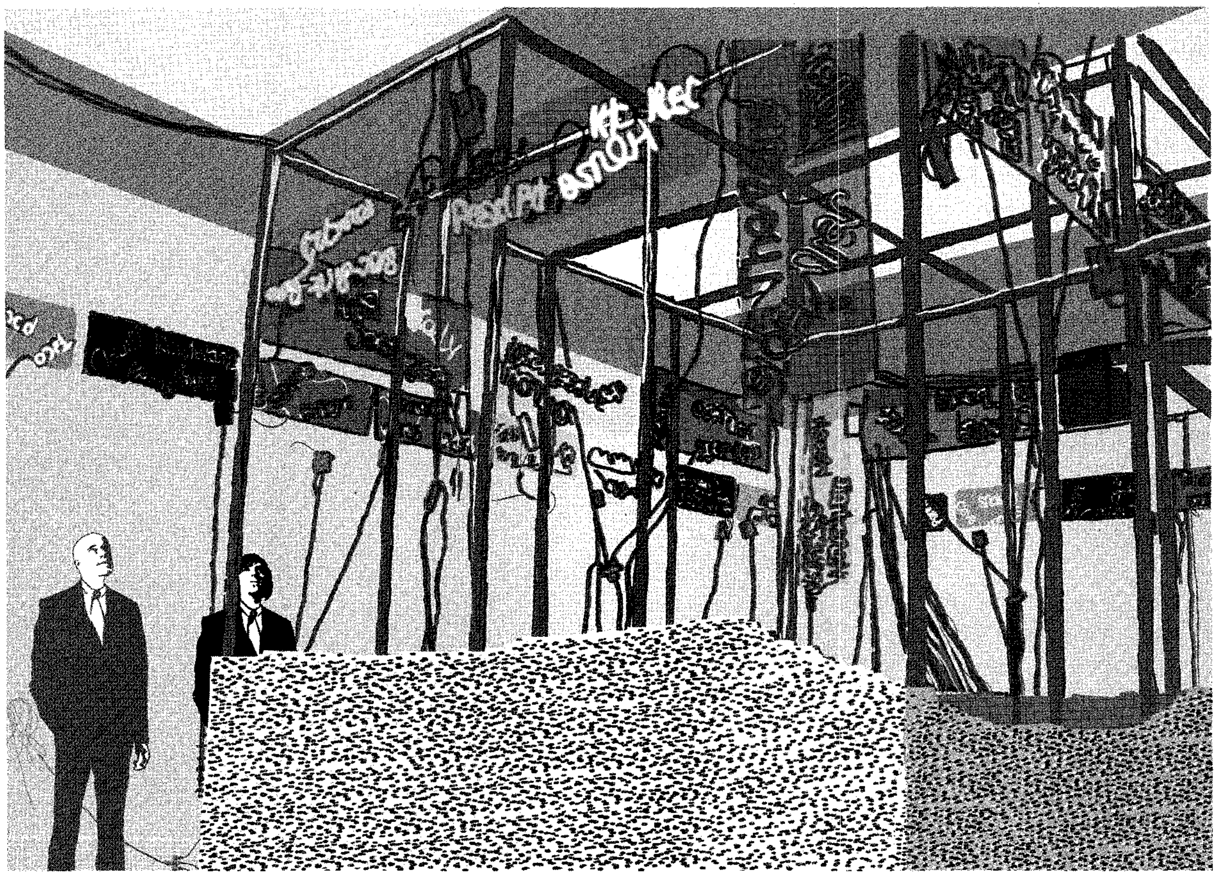
**SWANN**
Sept. 25 at 10:30 A.M.: Swann commemorates the life and work of the late Al Hirschfeld, master of the joyful caricature, with a sale of items drawn from private collections in Cleveland and New York. It includes a broad selection of the elastic and exuberant drawings whose loopy black lines captured the brashness and style of such Broadway and Hollywood stars as Jack Benny and Elizabeth Taylor, along with a range of etchings, lithographs, posters, and personal letters. (104 E. 25th St. 212-254-4710.)

## CLASSICAL MUSIC
## OPERA

**METROPOLITAN OPERA**
Renée Fleming, singing her first Violetta at the Met (after a well-received début in the role last spring at Houston Grand Opera), offers the first toast of the season as the doomed heroine of **"La Traviata."** Ramón Vargas, as Alfredo, and Valery Gergiev, the conductor, are two other Met regulars offering their "Traviata" talents in the house for the first time; Dmitri Hvorostovsky, the youthful, swaggering Russian baritone, once again takes up the role of the world-weary Germont. (Sept. 29 at 6:30.) ♦ Dieter Dorn's spare yet hypnotic production of **"Tristan und Isolde,"** first seen at the Met in 1999, returns with the same superb cast, including Jane Eaglen, Ben Heppner, Katarina Dalayman, and René Pape; James Levine conducts. (Sept. 30 at 7.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

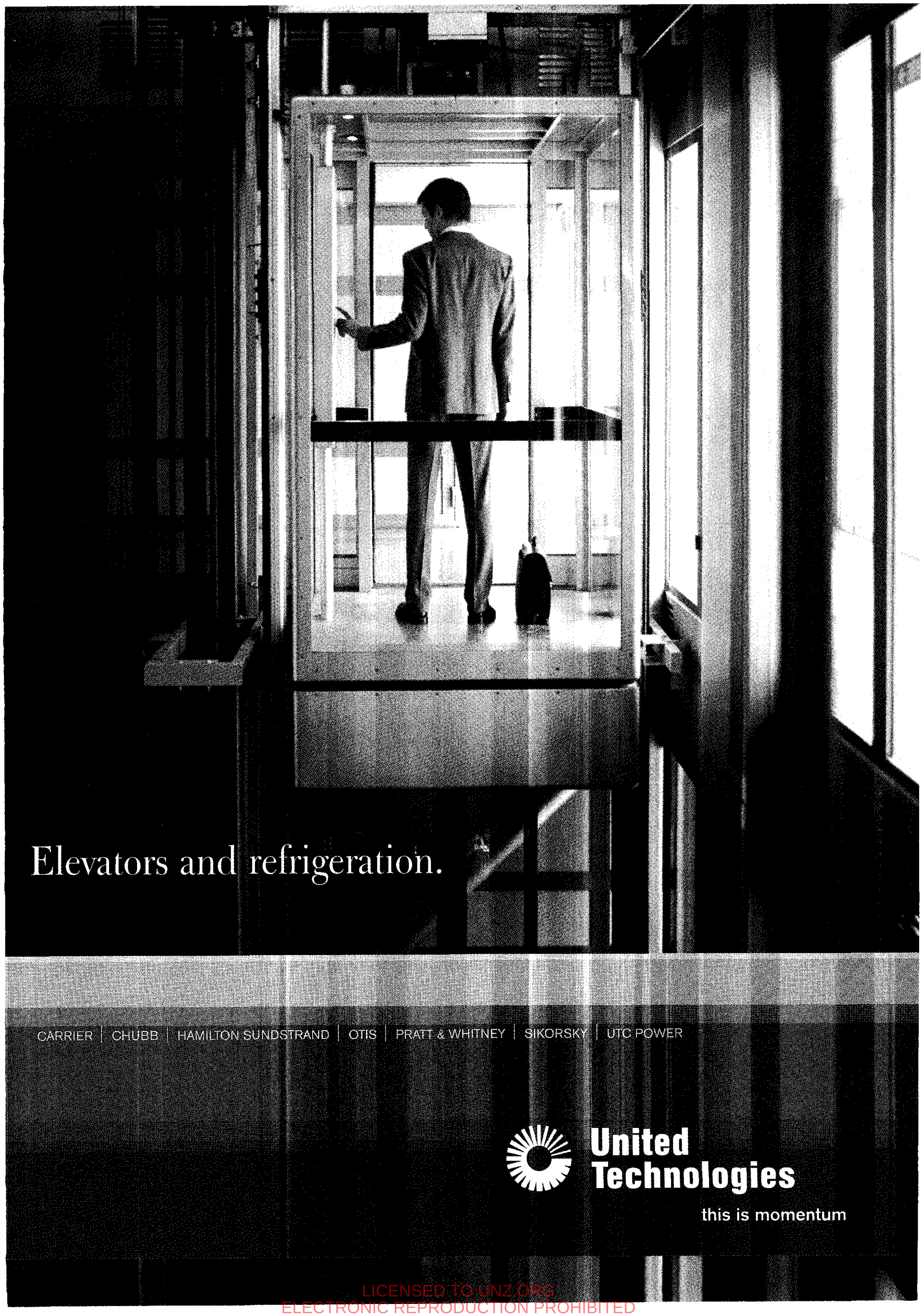
**NEW YORK CITY OPERA**
The final performances of Handel's **"Alcina,"** with Christine Goerke, Lauren Skuce, Katharine Goeldner, Jennifer Dudley, Keith Jameson, and Joshua Winograde; Daniel Beckwith conducts. (Sept. 24 at 7:30 and Sept. 26 at 8.) ♦ Perhaps it's the director James Robinson's solid musical background that gives him the talent to turn **"Lucia di Lammermoor"** into ensemble theatre without violating the spirit of Donizetti's score—though we lose the simple sense of spectacle that would have made Jennifer Welch-Babidge's wonderfully adept performance as Lucia into a truly star-making role. (Six months pregnant, she not only has to dance during her mad scene but sings the Sextet while standing on a sloping table.) Yet Robinson has still made a must-see "Lucia," reinforced by the natural Italianate style of Jorge Antonio Pita's Edgardo, the expressive intensity of Stephen Powell's Enrico, and the discipline of George Manahan and his orchestra, which in this production is certainly earning its pay. (Sept. 25 at 7:30 and Sept. 28 at 1:30.) ♦ Mark Lamos's exquisite staging of **"Madama Butterfly,"** featuring Chen Sue Panariello, Mika Shigematsu, Brandon Jovanovich, and Michael Corvino; Manahan conducts. (Sept. 27 at 1:30.) ♦ **"Carmen,"** with Hadar Halevy and Michael Hendrick as Carmen and Don José, Angela Fout as Micaëla, and Kelly Anderson as Escamillo; Steven White. (Sept. 27 at 8.) ♦ A new Lamos production of **"La Finta Giardiniera,"** Mozart's early comic masterpiece, featuring Lisa Saffer, Brenda Harris, Sandra Piques Eddy, Brian Anderson, and Matthew Chellis; Manahan. (Sept. 30 at 7:30.) (New York State Theatre. 212-870-5570.)

**JOHN MORAN**
Moran, the precocious operatic protégé of Philip Glass (he wrote his first opera, "Jack Benny!," at the tender age of twenty-three), returns to the Kitchen after an eight-year hiatus with a mélange of old and new works, including excerpts from his nine operas and the world premère of his version of Bach's Goldberg Variations. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. Sept. 25-27 at 8.)



*For "Meccatuna," at Zwirner, Jason Rhoades uses, among other things, neon, Legos, and forty-eight cans of tuna from Mecca.*

PETER HAMLIN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*The pi-pa player Wu Man performs at Merkin Concert Hall on September 25.*

JENS UMBACH

## ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

**NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC**
Lorin Maazel conducts a concert of virtuoso showpieces by Stravinsky ("The Rite of Spring"), Strauss ("Don Quixote," with the principal violist, Cynthia Phelps, and the principal cellist, Carter Brey), and Druckman (the vibrant, "Rite"-ish overture "Summer Lightning," played to commemorate what would have been his seventy-fifth-birthday year). (Sept. 24-25 and Sept. 30 at 7:30 and Sept. 26 at 11 A.M.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

**AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**
Not unlike Alban Berg a generation earlier, Luigi Dallapiccola managed to combine lyricism and emotion with the generally austere twelve-tone method of Schoenberg; Leon Botstein conducts his "Canti di Prigionia," a dark piece written during the Second World War, and the more meditative "Canti di Liberazione." Luigi Nono, a brilliant protagonist in the mid-century Darmstadt school of composers (which included his contemporaries Boulez and Stockhausen) and a fierce political radical, is represented here by the powerful "Tre Epitaffi per Federico García Lorca," a testament to the brutality of the Spanish Civil War. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500. Sept. 28 at 3.)

**METROPOLITAN MUSEUM CONCERTS: ORPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**
The conductorless chamber orchestra par excellence opens the museum's fiftieth-anniversary concert season with an hour-long program of works by Handel, Haydn (the "Oxford" Symphony), and Stravinsky in the Great Hall. (Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 212-570-3949. Sept. 24 at 7.)

## RECITALS

**CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER**
Chamber music, by definition, mandates the participation of only one player on a part—a rule that the Society will flaunt for the opening concert of its thirty-fifth season, the Serenades for Strings by Tchaikovsky and Dvořák. Included in the little intergenerational orchestra are the violinists Ida Kavafian and Joseph Silverstein and the Young Turks of the Pacifica String Quartet. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788. Sept. 24 at 8.)

**ZANKEL HALL OPENING FESTIVAL**
Yo-Yo Ma and some proficient friends (such as the pianist Kathryn Stott and the guitar brothers Sérgio and Odair Assad) bring the classical portion of the festival to a close with a celebration of Latin America's diverse musical heritage. Selections will be announced from the stage. (Zankel Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Sept. 24 at 9.)

**ANNE AKIKO MEYERS**
The violinist offers an expansive program of Ravel, Stravinsky (the "Suite Italienne"), Messiaen, Janáček, and Satoh ("Birds in Warped Time II"). (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. Sept. 25 at 8.)

**WU MAN / EARL HOWARD**
Wu Man, a woman of radiant beauty, is becoming to the pi-pa (the ancient Chinese lute) what her friend Yo-Yo Ma is to the cello—a virtuoso of magnetic appeal who has popularized her instrument and enriched its repertory in the process. A collaborator with such groups as the Silk Road Ensemble and the Kronos Quartet, she offers a program of new music by (among others) Philip Glass, Bun-Ching Lam, and the renowned saxophonist and electronic-music composer Earl Howard, who will also perform an improvisatory solo work. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Sept. 25 at 8.)

**"MUSIC OF THE SPHERES"**
This recently formed chamber series is dedicated to exploring the links between music, philosophy, and the sciences. Its next concert, "The Inspirations of Johannes Brahms," not only preludes the composer's Clarinet Quintet (featuring John Manasse) with music by Bach, Schumann, and Beethoven but also includes a lecture by Martin Nass, a professor of psychology at N.Y.U. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Sept. 25 at 8:15; the lecture precedes the concert at 7:30. Tickets at the door.)

**SOHEIL NASSERI**
Nasseri, a twenty-four-year-old pianist with a fine technique and an inquisitive spirit, has become one of New York's most prolific recitalists. He's known not only for attracting a stylish younger crowd to his concerts but for commissioning prominent composers; his latest concert features world premières by Ronn Yedidia and Richard Danielpour in addition to works by Beethoven and Rachmaninoff. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. Sept. 30 at 8.)

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**"CARMEN FUNEBRE"**
The Polish avant-garde ensemble Teatr Biuro Podrozy (Travel Bureau Theatre) presents the New York City début of its outdoor meditation on the horrors of war. Using stilt-walking masked figures, cracking whips, a dissonant score, and smoke and fire, the fifty-minute piece, which was created ten years ago and is based in part on interviews conducted with survivors of the conflict in Bosnia, conjures a dark and disturbing world that much of the public knows only through newspaper headlines and television news. (Old Tobacco Warehouse, Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park, Dumbo, Brooklyn. For more information, call 718-254-8779. Sept. 26-28 at 8:30.)

**READINGS**
Sept. 24 at 7: Warren Lehrer and Judith Sloan offer passages from "Crossing the BLVD," their new book and CD about the multicultural residents of Queens. The Nigerian gospel singer Kingsley Ogunde, the Romanian-American vocalist Christine Ghezzo, and members of the Gypsy-punk ensemble Gogol Bordello will also perform. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Sept. 25 at 7: Gary Shteyngart, Tom Bissell, and Paul Greenberg read from their contributions to "Wild East: Stories from the Last Frontier," a forthcoming collection of fiction about Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Sept. 29 at 8: John Hollander, Richard Howard, Elizabeth Spires, and other poets join Anthony Hecht for a reading of his poems and a belated eightieth-birthday celebration. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.)

**TALKS**
Sept. 24 at 7: The curator Toby Kamps talks about Ellsworth Kelly, whose work is currently on display at the Whitney Museum of American Art. (Madison Ave. at 75th St. For more information, call 212-570-7710.) ♦ Sept. 25 at 8: Alan Dershowitz, the author of "The Case for Israel," joins Phyllis Chesler, the author of "The New Anti-Semitism," for a discussion titled "Jews in Crisis: Israel and Around the Globe." (Hayes Auditorium, The College of Mt. St. Vincent, 6301 Riverdale Ave., at W. 263rd St., the Bronx. For more information, call 718-796-3119.)

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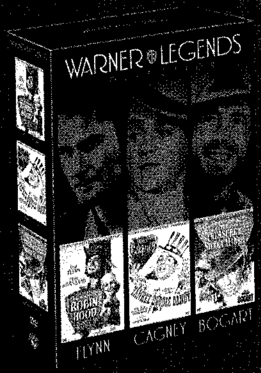
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# MOVIES OPENING

**BOLLYWOOD/HOLLYWOOD**
A young Indian millionaire (Rahul Khanna) hires a professional escort (Lisa Ray) to pose as his bride-to-be, in a musical comedy directed by Deepa Mehta. In English, Hindi, and Spanish. Opening Sept. 26.

**BUBBA HO-TEP**
Bruce Campbell plays Elvis Presley, still alive and trying to protect his Texas old-folks home from an Egyptian spirit, in a comedic horror film directed by Don Coscarelli. Opening Sept. 26. (Angelika Film Center.)

**DUPLEX**
Danny DeVito directed this comedy about a New York City couple (Drew Barrymore and Ben Stiller) and the ornery old lady who lives upstairs from them. Opening Sept. 26.

**LUTHER**
A bio-pic about Martin Luther (Joseph Fiennes), directed by Eric Till. With Peter Ustinov and Alfred Molina. Opening Sept. 26. (Empire 25.)

**MY LIFE WITHOUT ME**
Isabel Coixet's drama about a young working-class mother (Sarah Polley) who develops terminal cancer and hides her illness from her family. With Scott Speedman, Mark Ruffalo, and Deborah Harry. Opening Sept. 26.

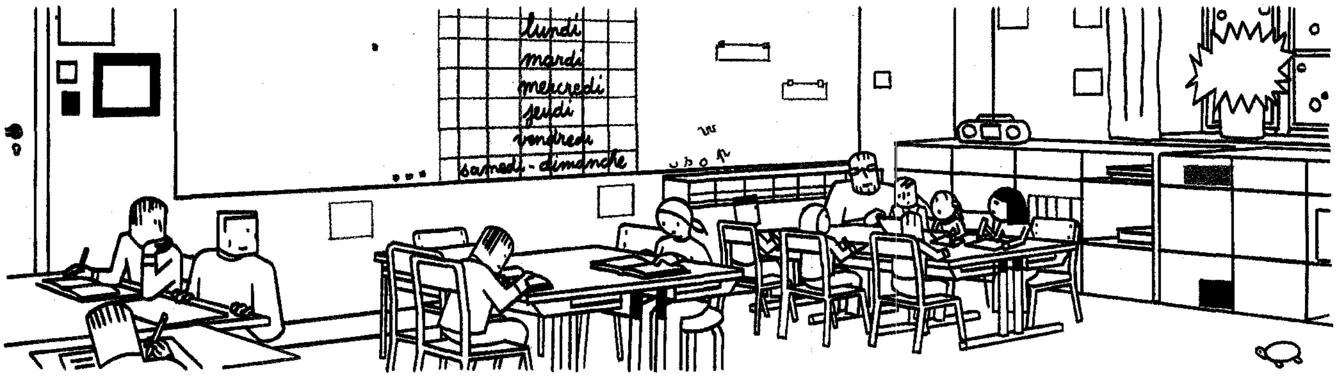
**THE RUNDOWN**
An adventure comedy in which a bounty hunter (the Rock) travels to Brazil to retrieve the wayward son (Seann William Scott) of a wealthy client. With Rosario Dawson and Christopher Walken. Directed by Peter Berg. Opening Sept. 26.

**7 YEAR ZIG-ZAG**
An experimental musical drama written in rhyming couplets and directed by Richard Green, who also stars. Opening Sept. 24. (Quad Cinema.)

**SOUTHLANDER**
A musician (Rory Cochrane) lands a gig with a successful Euro-pop band, only to lose the synthesizer that got him the job, in a comedy directed by Steven Hanft. With Beth Orton, Beck, Hank Williams III, and Elliott Smith. Opening Sept. 26. (Cinema Village.)

**UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN**
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Sept. 26.

**YOSSI & JAGGER**
Eytan Fox directed this drama about an affair between two male Israeli soldiers (Yehuda Levi and Ohad Knoller). In Hebrew. Opening Sept. 24. (Film Forum.)



*At Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Cinema Village, "To Be and to Have," a documentary about a one-room schoolhouse in France.*

# FILM NOTES

**AMERICAN SPLENDOR**
Well, it's different. Shari Springer Berman and Robert Pulcini, directing together, have made a drama-documentary in which the drama and the documentary look at each other but don't touch. The movie is about Harvey Pekar, a real and rusted-up gentleman from Cleveland. He works as a filing clerk, and his experiences have long been the subject of a comic strip, illustrated by—among others—Robert Crumb. So we get a good dose of Harvey. But we get an even better and funnier dose of Paul Giamatti, who plays an alternative Harvey, and who is framed, or sometimes drawn, in fond imitation of a comic book—the implication being that even the cruddiest lives can, in sympathetic hands, acquire shape and grace. The story, such as it is, moves from Harvey the record collector to Harvey the cancer sufferer to Harvey the chat-show guest. There is terrific supporting work from Hope Davis as Mrs. Pekar and from Judah Friedlander as Harvey's profoundly unusual friend Toby. Mild fame may have patronized these folks, but the movie pays them a comic homage that feels flattering, fast-witted, and true.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 8/18 & 25/03.) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Sunshine Cinema.)

**ANYTHING ELSE**
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, First & 62nd Street Cinema, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

**DIRTY PRETTY THINGS**
Okwe (Chiwetel Ejiofor), the African-in-exile hero of Stephen Frears's extraordinary London thriller, drives a cab during the day and works as a desk clerk in a good hotel at night; he keeps himself awake by chewing on some sort of African root. Like Travis Bickle, Robert De Niro's overstimulated psycho in "Taxi Driver," Okwe never really sleeps; unlike Bickle, Okwe is a good man, even a fanatically good man. In four or five frantic days, he tries to save another illegal immigrant, Senay (Audrey Tautou), from the clutches of the cheerfully sinister manager of the hotel in which they both work. Señor Juan (Sergi Lopez), as he's known, offers forged passports to illegals in return for a kidney or some other organ that he can sell on the black market. There are a few grisly scenes in the elegant upper rooms of the hotel, but "Dirty Pretty Things" is not a violent thriller. It might be called a social thriller—a tightly knit suspense film that reveals more of the lives of immigrants in London than the most scrupulously earnest documentaries. The great cinematographer Chris Menges keeps the images cool and crisp. There's no murk, no "atmosphere." However harried, Okwe, a great chess player, has to see every move in advance as he defends himself and his friends from the treachery on all sides.—*David Denby* (9/15/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Sunshine Cinema, and Sutton 1 and 2.)

**LE DIVORCE**
A Merchant-Ivory movie set in the present, which makes for a change. This one is the tale of two sisters: Isabel (Kate Hudson), who flies to Paris to visit her sister Roxy (Naomi Watts), who has married a dodgy Frenchman. Cue any number of cross-cultural collisions, as our hopeful young Americans—today's Daisy Millers—become ensnared in the oily grasp of old Europe. Isabel finds herself in bed with Edgar (Thierry Lhermitte), who has the decency to look faintly embarrassed about it. The movie contemplates sex, as well as abortion, suicide, and mental instability, but the director, James Ivory, seems fatally undecided as to whether such matters are worthy of solemn consideration or mere backdrops to a bit of fun. The moral of the piece, finally, appears to be "Don't marry out of your tribe," which is nice to know in these days of international suspicion. Wasted actors include Stockard Channing, Sam Waterston, Bebe Neuwirth, Glenn Close, and Matthew Modine; that's a lot of waste. Leslie Caron offers as pure a definition of grande dame as you are likely to find.—*A.L.* (8/18 & 25/03) (Paris and Union Square.)

**FREAKY FRIDAY**
The beloved Disney teen movie from 1976 gets a power-pop makeover. As in the original, mother and daughter magically switch bodies, and the best parts are when they put each other's lives through the paces. The saucer-eyed Lindsay Lohan, as the daughter, morphs from a slouching rocker into a perfect-posture girl, a Junior League aspirant set loose in high school. Jamie Lee Curtis has the more difficult assignment, contorting her adult body into the ungainly angles of adolescence. She pulls off the transformation with precision, and both she and Lohan grace their scenes with moments of dead-on physical parody. Together, they provide a delightful double take on the old mother-to-daughter mantra: Act your age.—*Michael Agger* (Empire 25 and Village East Cinemas.)

**IN THIS WORLD**
Is it a documentary? Is it a feature film? No, it's a supersensitive short story, long on pain and patience, from the British director Michael Winterbottom. He starts in a Pakistani refugee camp, picks out an Afghan boy named Jamal, seemingly at random, and tracks him to London. Jamal and an older acquaintance, Enayatullah, are smuggled out by road and boat, for a fat fee, in search of a hopeful life. That sounds plotless, but the movie is weirdly taut and harried, as the two Afghans are tracked through ancient, looming landscapes, treated like cargo by the unscrupulous, and, more rarely, honored as welcome strangers. The result is neither a plea nor a lecture, but afterward you will find it hard to view the travails of mass

LAURENT CILLUFFO

migration with a cold eye. In Pashto, Farsi, and English.—*A.L.* (9/22/03) (34th Street Theatre.)

### LOST IN TRANSLATION

Nothing much happens in the new film by the writer-director Sofia Coppola, but she has first-rate abilities as an observer and as a rueful comedian, and much of the movie is sweetly funny and satisfying. In Tokyo, a burned-out American movie star named Bob Harris (Bill Murray) shows up to appear in a whiskey ad. Stranded in a sleekly pompous modern hotel, he can't connect with anything or even sleep, but he does hook up (chastely) with a very young woman, Charlotte (Scarlett Johansson), whose fashion-photographer husband (Giovanni Ribisi) is rapidly slipping away from her. Both Bob and Charlotte are in emotional limbo, and they become an odd, inappropriate couple. Murray has never been this quiet, this wary, this subtly acid before—or this warm, either. The drama of the movie, such as it is, lies in seeing just how much he will respond and when.—*D.D.* (9/15/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

### THE MAGDALENE SISTERS

A scalding picture from Peter Mullan, set in Ireland in the nineteen-sixties. Three girls are sent to a Magdalene Asylum—one of a network of institutions to which wayward young women were consigned by their disapproving families. The asylums were run by Roman Catholic nuns; in this case, the presiding spirit is Sister Bridget (Geraldine McEwan), who counts her money in secret and speaks to her charges with a forked tongue. Finally, the trio of friends—played by Anne-Marie Duff, Dorothy Duffy, and Nora-Jane Noone—make their escape, as if from a prisoner-of-war camp. The system was certainly crushing, but it has inspired Mullan—a fine actor, whose previous film as director, "Orphans," was a scabrous Glaswegian comedy—to deliver his most intemperate work, which lashes out at the Catholic Church with the same hardness of heart that Sister Bridget and her colleagues display in their running of the asylum. You come away from the movie not just convinced but cowed.—*A.L.* (8/11/03) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sutton 1 and 2.)

### MATCHSTICK MEN

Nicolas Cage plays a man called Roy, who is both a head case—paranoid, agoraphobic, eaten up by nervous tics—and a smooth professional con artist. How these two sides mesh is never made clear; the director, Ridley Scott, is perhaps too busy making beautiful patterns out of Southern Californian sunlight to notice that his hero doesn't add up. Roy and his partner Frank (Sam Rockwell) rip off the unsuspecting, and the entire movie depends on the extent to which they may or may not choose to practice their skills on each other. The scams feel small, however, beside the big news in Roy's life—the reappearance of his daughter, Angela (Alison Lohman), fourteen years old and as tolerantly disposed toward the world as her father is petrified by it. The film, in fact, belongs to Lohman, who is so easy and unaffected that she makes the surrounding players look like freaks. Scott, normally so adept at leaping from one genre to the next, seems torn between the suspense of the con and the gentler demands of a parental love story; Lohman alone is bold enough not to notice the difference.—*A.L.* (9/22/03) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 1, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

### THE PARALLAX VIEW

In this 1974 assassination thriller, the director, Alan J. Pakula, works variations on elements from movies as wild as "The Manchurian Candidate" and "A Clockwork Orange." Yet he presents them so self-seriously that his portentousness drives you crazier than his notion of there being something rotten in the state of Amerika. Warren Beatty plays a reporter in the Pacific Northwest who goes undercover to investigate the killing of a senator at Seattle's Space Needle and finds a web of other murders and coverups. The explanation for the series of dark deeds is so out there and abstract that it satisfies the fears of all the conspiracy theorists in the audience—that's why, in a sense, this is the ultimate conspiracy movie. Paula Prentiss has a moving bit as a former girlfriend convinced she's going to be killed, but Pakula appears to pin the audience's identification with Beatty on his trite bond with his cracker-barrel editor (Hume Cronyn). Only Beatty's own physical and emotional shagginess generates any sustained humor or resonance in this film; in every other way, it's paranoia squared.—*Michael Sragow* (Moving Image; Sept. 28.)

### PARTY MONSTER

A superficial and murky tale about the Manhattan party promoter and club-kid king Michael Alig, whose notoriety stems from his participation in the killing of a drug-dealing pal. The co-directors Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato attempt a fevered glimpse of the trippy drug-saturated parties and the fabulous characters who created them, but their film adds up to little more than a series of lacklustre re-creations. And although the clubbing costumes are a hoot Macaulay Culkin, in the lead role, lacks the childish whimsy that made Alig's crime such a disturbing moment in New York night life. Only Seth Green, who plays Alig's mentor, James St. James, provides the narcissistic chirpiness that made club land so exotically self-destructive.—*Bruce Diones* (Angelika Film Center and Chelsea Cinemas.)

### ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL

A movie with possibly the oldest cast of actors ever assembled to play high-school students. This affable piece of camp from 1979 has the wit to push a fifties youth-movie plot to extremes and unite it with the seventies punk rock of the Ramones. Rock and roller Riff Randell (P. J. Soles), the Ramones' No. 1 fan, unites her schoolmates against the new rock-hating principal Miss Togar (Mary Woronov), with cheerfully apocalyptic results. The Ramones' driving beat and the film's spirit of dumb teen rebellion are enough to keep an audience pacified while waiting for by-now famous gags, like Miss Togar's asking the group, "Do your parents know you're Ramones?" With Paul Bartel, Vincent Van Patten, Clint Howard, and Dey Young.—*M.S.* (Sunshine Cinema; Sept. 26-27.)

### SECONDS

John Frankenheimer's macabre 1966 sci-fi thriller about a diabolical conspiratorial organization that arranges for people to be "reborn" via plastic surgery. There are some good ideas tucked away inside the scrambled unpleasantness; the best of them concerns a banker (John Randolph) who is vaguely dissatisfied with his life and arranges a Faustian bargain for a second chance (he comes back as Rock Hudson) but doesn't have any conception of a new life. Unfortunately, Hudson seems dull to us as well as to himself. Frankenheimer shows off (he even stages a bacchanal), and James Wong Howe displays his camera pyrotechnics.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum; Sept. 26-29.)

### SWIMMING POOL

Charlotte Rampling gives another outstanding performance, this time as an uptight mystery writer who accepts an offer from her publisher to use his house in the South of France for some inspiration. When his sexy daughter (the luscious Ludivine Sagnier) shows up uninvited, a slow-burning and deliberately abstract mystery is set in motion. The director François Ozon (who's worked with Rampling before, in the very similar "Under the Sand") crafts a seductive puzzle that may have audiences wondering, in a pleasant way, what it was that they just saw. In French and English.—*B.D.* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

### TAKING SIDES

After the Second World War, the German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler (played, though not impersonated, by Stellan Skarsgård) is questioned at length by Steve Arnold (Harvey Keitel), an American major, whose task is to "find him guilty." Furtwängler had stayed in place through the rise and fall of the Nazi regime, leading the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras in concerts that were not just sanctioned but encouraged. Even now, listeners are forced to wonder what role Furtwängler fulfilled for Hitler: lackey, dupe, or cultural front man? In the movie, he defends himself as a subtle resister; the screenwriter, Ronald Harwood, and the director, István Szabó, set up a hot, claustrophobic head-to-head between the accuser and the accused. The result is so conscious of its contribution to the moral debate that it forgets to wake up as a movie, and the shots of a ruined Berlin are a perfunctory joke.

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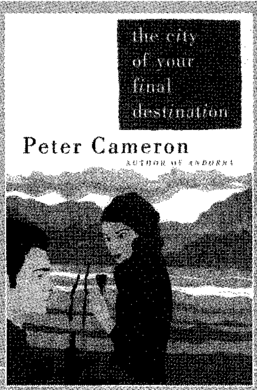
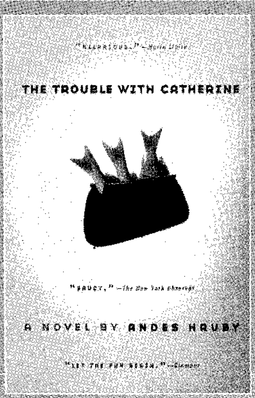


Peter Cameron's latest novel, a PEN/Faulkner Award and *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize finalist, is "delightful, unexpected, magical, [and] romantic" (USA Today).



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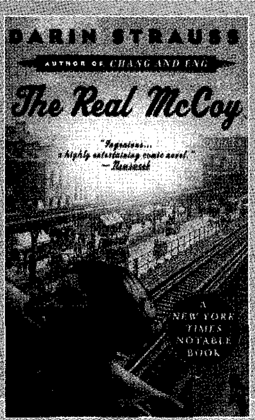
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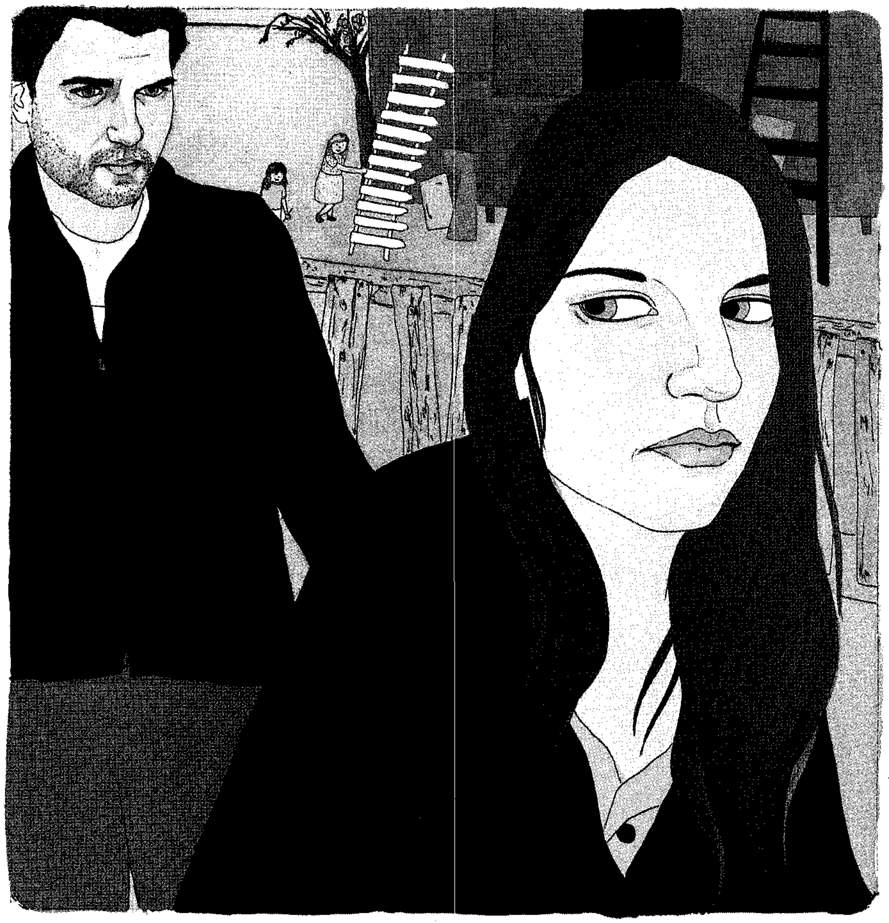

*Mark Ruffalo and Sarah Polley in "My Life Without Me," opening September 26.*

LARA TOMLIN

Keitel is an annoying presence, but maybe that's the point: Arnold is a brute, a bigot, and a philistine, but, when it comes to the sins of the maestro, he's right.—*A.L.* (9/8/03) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

**THIRTEEN**

Evan Rachel Wood is Trace, a Los Angeles junior-high-schooler going nuts from being thirteen. Nikki Reed is Evie, the fast, knowing, cat-eyed girl Trace develops a crush on. The two cruise the shops on Melrose Avenue, buying or stealing what they need, and they dress for school like baby whores. This sensational (in both senses) independent feature, directed by the former set designer Catherine Hardwicke and shot by ace cameraman Elliot Davis, is an emotionally coherent work about incoherent longing—the girls abuse themselves and others and run from one extreme emotion to another. The movie is so absorbing and intelligent that you don't feel repelled by the destructiveness of what they do. With Holly Hunter in a brave performance as Mel, Trace's forty-fiveish mother, who is herself a kind of teenager. Nikki Reed poured a lot of her own disasters into the script, which was written in collaboration with Hardwicke.—*D.D.* (9/1/03) (Beekman, Empire 25, 19th Street East 6, 62nd & Broadway, and Sunshine Cinema.)

**TIGER BAY**

Hayley Mills, at age thirteen, made an astounding début in J. Lee Thompson's 1959 suspense film as a tough eleven-year-old Cardiff child who sees a returning Polish sailor (Horst Buchholz) murder his unfaithful lover (Yvonne Mitchell). This girl never stops crying wolf: she's a playactor and prevaricator who responds to perceived slights and real dangers by telling bigger and better whoppers. Mills navigates the psychic roller-coaster turns with gusto, and she forges a touching connection with Buchholz's vivid, emotionally chaotic seaman, who desperately wants to see himself as a good man despite his crime of passion. Add Hayley's father, John, as the police superintendent—his scenes with her are marvels of dense manipulation—and Thompson's eye-opening look at Cardiff's multicultural underclass, and you've got a minor classic, even with the corny music and the rudimentary plot mechanics.—*M.S.* (Gramercy Theatre; Sept. 27.)

**TO BE AND TO HAVE**

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

## ALSO PLAYING

**CABIN FEVER**

Battery Park 16, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Sutton 1 and 2, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.

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**Chelsea Cinemas,** 260 W. 23rd St.
**Chelsea West,** 333 W. 23rd St.

**Cinemas 1, 2, and 3,** Third Ave. at 60th St.
**Cinema Village,** 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
**East 86th Street Cinemas,** Third Ave. at 86th St.
**84th Street Sixplex,** Broadway at 84th St.
**Empire 25,** on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
**59th Street East Cinema,** 239 E. 59th St.
**First & 62nd Cinemas,** 400 E. 62nd St.
**42nd Street E Walk,** 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
**Kips Bay Theatre,** Second Ave. at 32nd St.
**Lincoln Plaza Cinemas,** Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
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**New York Twin,** Second Ave. at 66th St.
**19th Street East 6,** Broadway at 19th St.
**Orpheum VII,** Third Ave. at 86th St.
**Paris,** 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
**Quad Cinema,** 34 W. 13th St.
**72nd Street East,** Third Ave. at 71st St.
**64th and 2nd,** Second Ave. at 64th St.
**62nd & Broadway,** 62 W. 62nd St.
**Sunshine Cinema,** 139-143 E. Houston St.
**Sutton 1 and 2,** Third Ave. at 57th St.
**34th Street Theatre,** 312 W. 34th St.
**Union Square,** Broadway at 13th St.
**Village East Cinemas,** Second Ave. at 12th St.
**Village Theatre VII,** Third Ave. at 11th St.
**Ziegfeld,** 141 W. 54th St.

## REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

*Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.*

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE**
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Sept. 28: "From the Dream Life: American Movies and the Mythology of the 1960s." Sept. 27 at 2: "The Last Movie" (1971, Dennis Hopper). ♦ Sept. 27 at 4:30: "Dirty Little Billy" (1973, Stan Dragoti). ♦ Sept. 28 at 2: "The Parallax View" (†). ♦ Sept. 28 at 4:30: "Shampoo" (1975, Hal Ashby). ♦ Repertory nights. Sept. 26 at 7:30: "Once Upon a Time in China II" (1992, Tsui Hark; in Cantonese). ♦ Sept. 27-28 at 6:30: "Le Cercle Rouge" (1970, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French).

**BAM ROSE CINEMAS**
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Sept. 24 at 7: "Do I Love You?" (2003, Lisa Gornick). ♦ New films from France. All movies are in French. Sept. 25 at 4:30 and 9:10 and Sept. 26 at 2 and 6:50: "A Piece of Sky" (2002, Bénédicte Liénard). ♦ Sept. 25 at 6:50 and Sept. 26 at 4:30 and 9:10: "A Big Girl Like You" (2003, Christophe Blanc). ♦ Sept. 27 at 4:30 and 9:10 and Sept. 28 at 2 and 6:50: "Nearest to Heaven" (2002, Tonie Marshall). ♦ Sept. 27 at 2 and 6:50 and Sept. 28 at 4:30 and 9:10: "Minor Cuts" (2003, Pascal Bonitzer). ♦ Special screening. Sept. 29 at 4:30, 6:40, and 9:30 and Sept. 30 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Boys of 2nd Street Park" (2003, Dan Klores and Ron Berger).

**FILM FORUM**
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Through Oct. 9: A John Frankenheimer retrospective. Sept. 24 at 1, 3:45, 6:30, and 9:15: "Black Sunday" (1977). ♦ Sept. 25 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30: "The Young Savages" (1961). ♦ Sept. 26-29 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30: "Seconds" (†). ♦ Sept. 30 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30: "I Walk the Line" (1970).

**FLORENCE GOULD HALL**
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—The films of the actress Jane Birkin. Sept. 30 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Love on the Ground" (1984, Jacques Rivette; in French).

**GRAMERCY THEATRE**
127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900)—Through Oct. 17: "John Mills: Forever English," a twenty-three-film retrospective of the actor's work. Sept. 25 at 2: "Scott of the Antarctic" (1948, Charles Frend). ♦ Sept. 25 at 4:15 and Sept 28 at 1: "Those Were the Days" (1933, Thomas Bentley). ♦ Sept. 27 at 1: "Ice Cold in Alex" (1958, J. Lee Thompson). ♦ Sept. 27 at 3:30: "Tiger Bay" (†). ♦ Sept. 29 at 8: "Tunes of Glory" (1960, Ronald Neame). ♦ Through Oct. 5: "Heddy Honigmann: Direct Address," the films of the Dutch director. Sept. 25 at 6:15 and Sept. 29 at 6: "O Amor Natural" (1996; in Portuguese). ♦ Sept. 25 at 8 and Sept. 28 at 3:30: "Goodbye" (1995; in Dutch). ♦ Sept. 26 at 2:30: "Private" (2000; in Dutch). ♦ Sept. 26 at 4: "Good Husband, Dear Son" (2001; in Serbo-Croatian). ♦ Sept. 26 at 6: "Give Me Your Hand" (2003; in Spanish). ♦ Sept. 26 at 8:30 and Sept. 28 at 6:15: "Metal and Melancholy" (1993; in Spanish). ♦ Sept. 27 at 6: "Crazy" (1999; in Dutch and Serbo-Croatian). ♦ Sept. 27 at 8: "The Underground Orchestra" (1997; in French and Spanish).

**PIONEER THEATRE**
155 E. 3rd St. (212-254-3300)—Sept. 24-30: "Wild Style" (1982, Charlie Ahearn). ♦ Special event. Sept. 29 at 8: "Bone" (1972, Larry Cohen), followed by an interview with the director.

**SUNSHINE CINEMA**
139-143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0573)—Midnight movies. Sept. 26-27: "Rock 'n' Roll High School" (†).

**WALTER READE THEATRE**
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through Sept. 28: "Latinbeat 2003," a survey of recent films from Latin America. All films are in Spanish unless otherwise noted. Sept. 24 at 6:30: "The Archangel's Feather" (2002, Luis Manzo). ♦ Sept. 24 at 8:30, Sept. 25 at 4, and Sept. 26 at 9: "Bazooka" (2003, Mario Diaz). ♦ Sept. 25 at 2 and 6:30 and Sept. 27 at 7: "Destiny Has No Favorites" (2002, Alvaro Velarde). ♦ Sept. 25 at 8:30, Sept. 26 at 1:30, and Sept. 27 at 4:30: "Stones in the Sky" (2001, Eryk Rocha; in Portuguese). ♦ Sept. 26 at 3:45 and Sept. 28 at 1: "Hurricanes" (2003, Enrique Colina). ♦ Sept. 26 at 6:15 and Sept. 28 at 3:30 and 8:30: "Caiman's Dream" (2000, Beto Gómez). ♦ Sept. 27 at 1:45 and 9 and Sept. 28 at 6:15: "El Bonaerense" (2002, Pablo Trapero).

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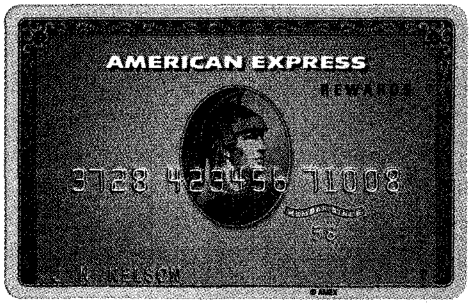

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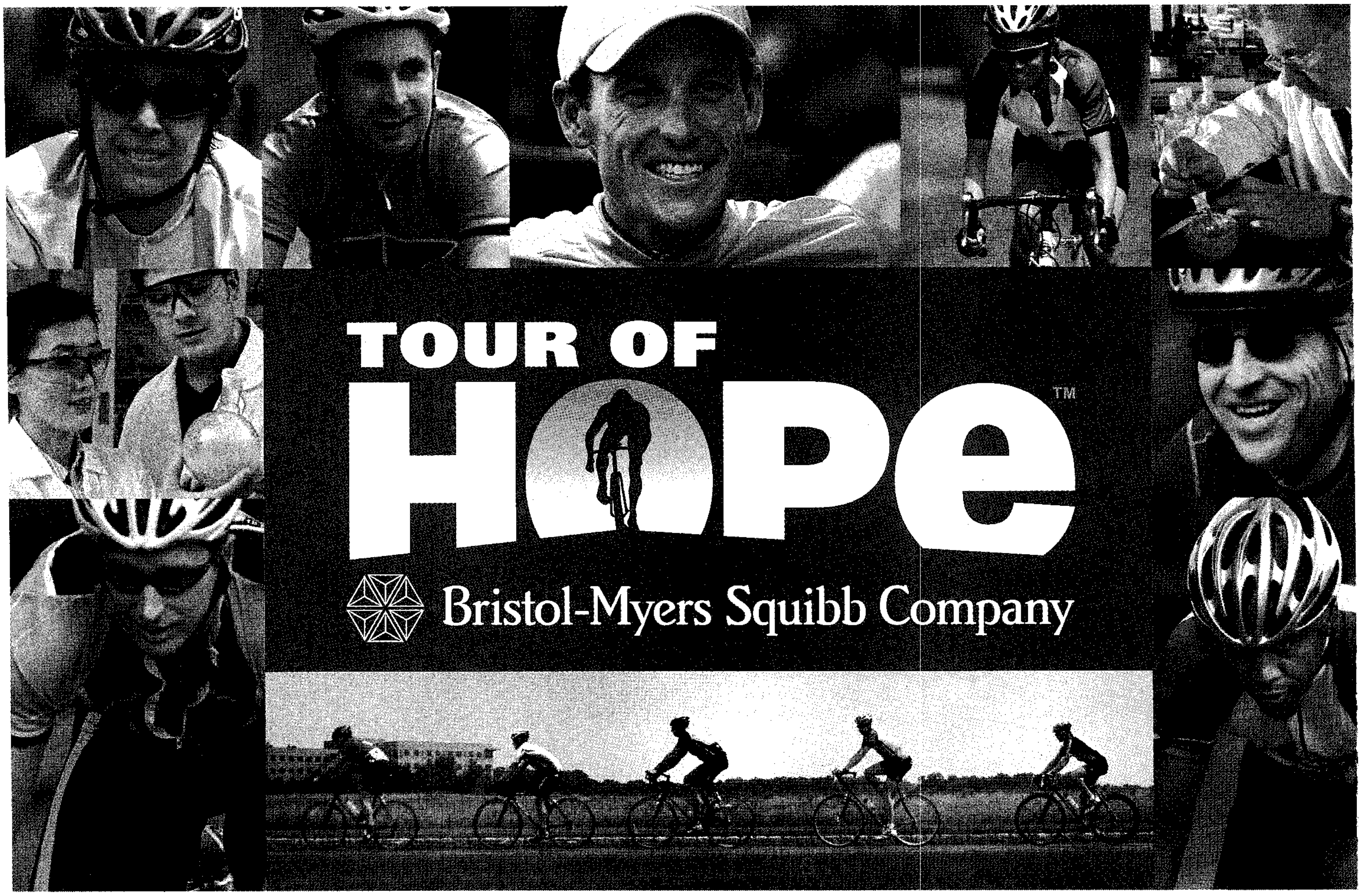

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THE NEW YORKER

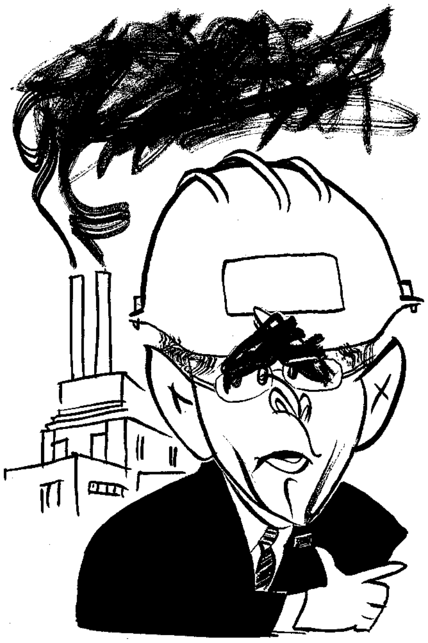
# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## COMMENT
## CLOUDING THE AIR

Each year, the Detroit Edison plant in Monroe, Michigan, burns roughly eight million tons of coal. That is enough to generate electricity for three million homes and also to make the plant one of the nation's most extravagant polluters. In 2001, the last year for which complete data are available, Monroe's smokestacks emitted, among other things: more than a hundred thousand tons of sulfur dioxide (the principal pollutant in acid rain), nearly forty-six thousand tons of nitrous oxide (the chief ingredient of smog), and seventeen and a half million tons of carbon dioxide (the major culprit in global warming). Widely accepted statistical models project that the plant will cause some three hundred premature deaths annually, from ailments like lung disease and stroke. All of which makes President Bush's visit to Monroe last week to tout his latest air-quality initiatives either horribly ill-advised or, if you prefer, perversely appropriate.

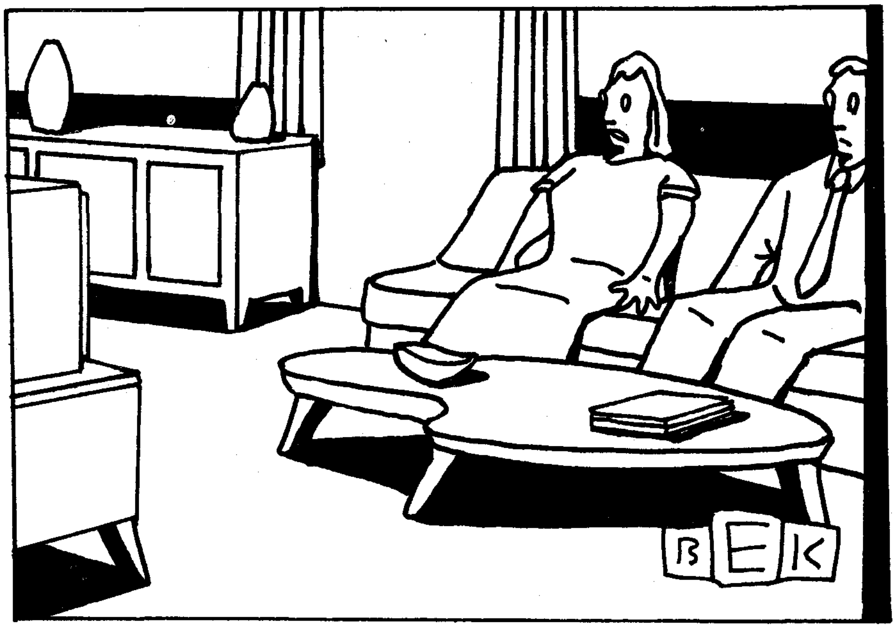
ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

Even in the catalogue of depredations that is the Bush Administration's environmental record—a list that includes the decision to reclassify various forms of mining waste as "fill" so that it can be dumped in valleys and streams; the attempt to open up millions of acres of public lands (including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge) for oil exploration; and the so-called Healthy Forests initiative, whose major beneficiary is the logging industry—the President's assault on the Clean Air Act stands out. When Congress approved the act, back in 1970, its goal was explicitly to prevent plants like Detroit Edison's from being built. Because of the difficulty—the expense, really—of retrofitting existing plants, Congress granted them an exemption but some years later stipulated that if changes were made that went beyond "routine maintenance" the plants would have to be equipped with up-to-date pollution controls. In resisting this requirement, known as "new source review," or N.S.R., plant operators have over the years tried to define as "routine maintenance" projects that were essentially rebuilding efforts. (In one spectacular example, the Tennessee Valley Authority labelled as "routine maintenance" a project that required constructing an entire miniature monorail system.)



Then, last New Year's Eve, the Bush Administration proposed new rules that broadened the definition of "routine maintenance" to allow operators to make, in effect, any changes they want to their plants without installing new pollution controls. These rules were finalized just before Labor Day weekend, and, not coincidentally, before Governor Mike Leavitt, of Utah, the President's nominee to be the next E.P.A. administrator, was forced to take a position on them. (At an E.P.A. hearing in Salt Lake City this past spring, Utah's air-quality director labelled the Administration's plans for N.S.R. "a disastrous approach to managing air quality," "a step backward," and a "train wreck.") According to environmentalists, the new N.S.R. regulations would let the Monroe plant emit about forty thousand additional tons of sulfur dioxide a year.

Critics argue that the new rules represent yet another payback from the Administration to a friendly industry—the *Times* called them a "giveaway to Mr. Bush's corporate allies." Certainly the paper trail is suggestive. In March, 2001, an official of the Southern Company, the owner of twenty-three coal-fired power plants, a defendant in several lawsuits that the Clinton Administration



*"Why can't David Blaine just stick himself somewhere and not involve the rest of us?"*

• •

brought under the Clean Air Act, and a major Republican donor, wrote to Vice-President Cheney's energy task force urging "reform" of the N.S.R. regulations. Precisely such a "reform" effort was recommended in the task force's final report, and the changes made to the regulations last month can be considered its fruits. (The Southern Company memo was made public thanks to prolonged litigation by the Natural Resources Defense Council.)

What the new N.S.R. rules finally reflect, though, even beyond undue corporate influence, is the Bush Administration's casual relationship to cause and effect. You can say that your three-hundred-and-fifty-billion-dollar tax cut is aimed at the middle class, but when the top two-tenths of a per cent of the population stands to gain more than the bottom seventy per cent it's not the middle class that's going to benefit. Similarly, you can claim that tax cuts pay for themselves, but, four hundred and eighty billion dollars' worth of red ink later, there is, it would seem, something off about the calculation. And you can argue that dismantling pollution laws will produce cleaner air, but the fish in acidified lakes know (if that's the right word) different. The companion piece to the new N.S.R. regulations is a package of bills that the President calls—in the Orwellian spirit of Healthy Forests—his Clear Skies initiative. The Administration likes to assert that the initiative, if approved, would reduce power-plant emissions by seventy per cent by the year 2018. In fact, the initiative weakens several laws that are already on the books, and that would reduce the same pollutants by a greater amount in a shorter period of time.

Last week, by way of defending the new N.S.R. regulations, Bush invoked the progress that has been made since the Clean Air Act was passed. "Our economy has grown one hundred and sixty-four per cent in three decades," he said. "That's pretty good growth. And yet, according to a report that the E.P.A. is releasing today, air pollution from six major pollutants is down by forty-eight per cent during that period of time." Citing the success of the Clean Air Act in order to justify gutting it makes, on the face of it, no sense whatsoever; if there's any lesson here, it's that tough pollution standards work, and that they are perfectly consistent with a robust economy. But the weakness of the President's arguments only makes the broader message of his trip to Monroe that much plainer: nothing is going to stand in the way of the Administration's environmental program, least of all logic.

—*Elizabeth Kolbert*

## STICKS AND STONES
### REPLY TO ALL, WITH HISTORY

Jim Rogers, the so-called Indiana Jones of finance, is among those businessmen who, though not exactly hard-knocks graduates (Rogers attended Yale and Oxford), feel that the important lessons for achieving success are more apt to be gleaned from, say, a motorcycle ride across Siberia (Rogers holds two Guinness World Records for travelling around the globe) than from any formal schooling, least of all an M.B.A. program. Nonetheless, Rogers, like many moguls, is a happy participant in the B-school lecture circuit, on which C.E.O.s, studio executives, and authors get paid essentially to recount their own achievements, and perhaps to promote their latest projects—in Rogers's case, a new book, "Adventure Capitalist."

It was during one such appearance, at Harvard Business School the other day, that Rogers, wearing his usual bow tie and employing his Alabama drawl, first encountered Dmitry Alimov, and set off a chain of correspondence that future students would do well to examine. It is a case study in making a name for oneself, or making a fool of oneself—depending on your point of view. Dmitry, who is twenty-nine, is a native of Russia and a former employee of Gazprom, the Russian conglomerate. Like Rogers, he is an inveterate international traveller; unlike Rogers, he dresses the part of a post-Soviet European (white jeans, big collars, "Armani-type stuff"), and has chosen to enroll in business school. (He's HBS '04.) Dmitry is also the type of business student who raises his hand a lot, as he did when Rogers hammered on one of his favorite themes—that Russia, though full of adventure, is devoid of real capital ("It's a disaster spiralling downward into a catastrophe"), and unworthy of investment.

Dmitry stood and aired his disagreements. Rogers more or less dismissed them. So that night, Dmitry wrote Rogers an e-mail. "I am the 'lad' who disputed your factual claims with regard to Russia today," it began. He identified three specific allegations that Rogers had made: people are leaving Russia ("wrong"); Russia's oil production is declining, and oil companies are not reinvesting ("wrong and wrong"); investors are abandoning Russia ("wrong again"). "Many people, including future leaders at Harvard Business School, listen to you," he concluded. "It would be very unfortunate if they were misled by your inaccurate statements. Finally, if nothing else, it is not good for your own public image." He added a postscript: "I took the liberty of sending a copy of this e-mail to my fellow students so that we can set the record straight."

Round two came the following morning, in an e-mail reply from Rogers: "I rarely suffer fools gladly, and even more rarely bother with chauvinistic know-nothings, but since you sent this ludicrous canard . . ." Dmitry was gullible, Rogers said, for believing in data provided by the Russian government and the World Bank, among other things. "If you really believe all this codswallop, why are you in business school?" Rogers wrote. "Why aren't you there making your fortune?" He continued, "I was terribly embarrassed for you when you stood there babbling on in front of the others about the strong ruble . . . , but now you have shouted your hopelessness from the rooftops for all to see." Rogers, not to be outshouted, copied Dmitry's classmates on the response.

Round three, later that night. "I see that you prefer the language of personal insults instead of informed polite discussion," Dmitry, now a minor celebrity on the south bank of the Charles, replied (again to all). This time, he affixed evidence supplied by the U.S. government as well. "Let me know if you desire to see my bank statements and résumé. . . . I think you'll be pleasantly surprised, maybe even compare them to yours when you were my tender age, for a real awakening."

Within days, the complete works of Rogers-Alimov, running to a few thousand words, had become one of those e-mails forwarded with great alacrity and mirth among Wall Street firms, British parliamentary committees, and salesmen in Korea. Typical reactions could be broken down into four categories: those from people who have always suspected that business school is a sham ("Jim Rogers kicking some B-school ass"); from the usual array of Harvard-haters; from certain fellow M.B.A. aspirants (to Dmitry: "Keep up the good work, and don't let him get to you. You are representing us well"); and—case students, take note—from employers who have been moved to offer Dmitry a job ("If you would ever consider working for an investment bank . . . ").

Round four has yet to be fought, although by late last week a side skirmish had broken out—copied to everyone, of course—between Rogers and Boris Jurash, an employee in the British Department of Constitutional Affairs (Boris: "I just like winding up smugheads like yourself." Rogers: "It is clear English is not a language in which you are proficient." Boris: "Don't be a twit, and stop clogging the Net"). Rogers seems to have lost interest in debating Dmitry, meanwhile, as he travels to promote his book. "I don't know why I even bothered to answer that guy in the first place," he said, over the phone. "Whether oil production is up five or six per cent is pretty meaningless in the context of this discussion, which was, and is, that Russia's a hopeless place to invest."

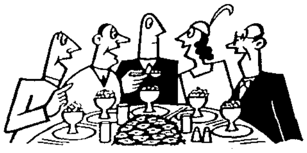
"My take on this is that Rogers can't respond based on facts, because he knows his facts are wrong," Dmitry said. "My best guess is he probably never had the chance to go to business school, and he probably had this feeling of being a little bit inadequate about that."

"Inadequate," in Rogers's view, of course, is a term that might better be applied to Dmitry. "All over the world people are saying, 'What's wrong with this guy?' " Rogers said. "From the responses I've got, this makes him look like a fool."

*—Ben McGrath*

### THE PICTURES

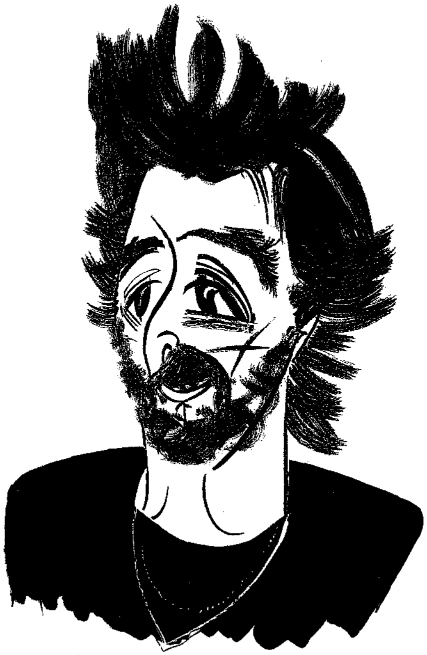
## TONY AGAIN



Guests at last week's special screening of the re-released movie "Scarface"—about a Cuban immigrant named Tony Montana who becomes a powerful, wealthy, and very profane drug lord—seemed noticeably liberated after watching the film at City Cinemas, across from Bloomingdale's. When it was over, they moved on to the Metropolitan Club to toast its twentieth anniversary.

"Why the fuckin' snob Metropolitan Club?" a young employee of City Cinemas asked.

"This movie is so like fuckin' life," his companion said. "I've seen it thirty times. When you see it, you never let it go."



*Al Pacino*

"Scarface" features Al Pacino, Steven Bauer, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, among others. It has inspired many imitations and has been accorded a cult of followers around the world, including rappers and young men in the business of high finance. The screenwriter was Oliver Stone, the director Brian De Palma, the producer Martin Bregman. At the Metropolitan Club, a number of these folks celebrated over a huge spread of food and drink, while the movie's oft-repeated message, "The World Is Yours," was projected in colored streams of lights across the marble halls and walls. Samplings of Hollywood agents, producers, managers, publicists, and distributors joined in. They lined up to congratulate Pacino, who was wearing a black suit and a thin gold chain over a black T-shirt. He had a scraggly gray beard, because, he explained, he just hadn't felt like shaving for a week. Hand-shaking kept him from getting hold of a first forkful of pasta and salad, and from talking to his table companion, Lee Strasberg's widow, Anna, who was trying to tell him about her new grandchild. Pacino stood up politely for the well-wishers.

"It's a truly fucking great film," a man from an entertainment publication told him.

"Well done," James Lipton, the host of "Inside the Actors Studio," said, with teacherly restraint, gently patting Pacino on the back.

"It's on another level—it's operatic," Jeff Berg, the chairman of I.C.M., said.

Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, who plays Tony's sister, Gina, in the movie, had flown in from London for the occasion. "It's puzzling," she said. "With all the work I've done in my life, this is the one I'm known for."

"You're big with the rappers now," someone told her. "They love this movie."

"I'm really curious about what their ideology is," she said.

"The movie is dedicated to Howard Hawks and Ben Hecht, so maybe the thread started there," someone else said.

"When Tony shoots the crooked cop and says, 'So long, Mel, have a good trip!'—that's seminal," an elderly gentleman said.

Some of the guests rendered Tony Montana impersonations:

"You're all a bunch of fucking assholes! You need people like me. So you can point your fucking fingers and say—'That's the bad guy!' "

"I always tell the truth, even when I lie."

"I'm Tony Montana from Cuba, and I want my fucking human rights now!"

One man, who said he worked on Wall Street, told Pacino that the line he and his colleagues loved best was "Why don't you try sticking your head up your ass, see if it fits?"

Their second favorite, he went on, was one recited by Frank, a drug boss whom Tony orders killed: "Lesson No. 1, 'Don't underestimate the other guy's greed.' Lesson No. 2, 'Don't get high on your own supply.' "

Pacino welcomed all these recitations with a friendly grin. His pasta, on the table, was starting to congeal. Steven Bauer, who plays Tony's friend Manuel Ray in the movie, came over, and the actors hugged each other.

"You told me when we made the movie it would come back big," Bauer said.

"It's a different thing," Pacino said. "It's a movie, because it's on film. But it's a different kind of movie."

"You said, 'Trust me, trust me.' You said, 'This one is different, and it will always be different.' "

"It was that combination of Oliver Stone and De Palma that did it," Pacino said.

"And *you*," Bauer said. "For years, people have been coming up to me on the street and yelling, 'Hey, Manolo! Shoot that piece of shit!' In Miami, kids come over and say, 'Every Halloween, I'm you.' "

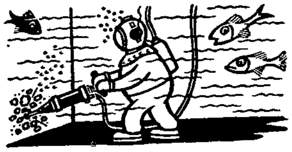
An elegant older woman walked over to Pacino and looked with astonishment at his still untouched dish of pasta.

"What the fuck are you eating?" she asked.

"I love it when you talk dirty to me," Pacino said, his face behind the beard looking as pure as they come.

—*Lillian Ross*

## BRICKS AND MORTAR DEPT.
## THE ROOF IS NOT ON FIRE



In the spring of 1947, William Katavolos is the solitary occupant of the Ram's Head Inn, on Ram Island, off eastern Long Island. Katavolos is twenty-three. His father has leased the inn. Katavolos has returned from the war and wants a place where he can paint and be left alone. The hotel is reached by a causeway from Shelter Island, and the causeway sometimes floods, leaving Katavolos as isolated as a lighthouse keeper. To amuse himself one evening, he puts some water in a glass, covers the rim of the glass with waxed paper, then presses the paper into the water to create a vacuum. He secures the paper to the glass with a rubber band, then turns the glass upside down. The water fills the vacuum, preserving the dome—it looks like the bottom of a wine bottle. Then he begins to wonder what would happen if he repeated the experiment on a larger scale. A few days later, he throws a tarpaulin over a section of Gardiners Bay. He weights down the edges so that no air can get beneath the tarpaulin, then he swims underneath it. Using two oars, he raises the center of the tarpaulin. The water fills the cavity, and he swims into it, floating above sea level, which, he says later, "fascinated the hell out of me." This is the beginning of what Katavolos will call hydronics, the practice of making buildings from soft plastic forms filled with water.

In 1949, Katavolos gives up painting to design furniture—his chairs are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum, and the Louvre—and in 1960 he begins teaching architecture at the Pratt Institute, in Brooklyn, where he will become the co-director of the Center for Experimental Structures. In 1970, in a courtyard at Pratt, he builds the first hydronic structure—a plastic dome filled with water and supported by a plastic cylinder, also filled with water. The plastic is like Saran Wrap, only thicker. Each year after that, he builds a new structure. He calls the structures liquid villas. They consist of columns, arches, and vaults—the elements, that is, of classical architecture. Katavolos sometimes describes hydronics as "the attempt to arrive again at classical forms, for new reasons."

Katavolos regards water as an immensely sensible construction material. To begin with, it's cheap. It's also safe; buildings made from water don't usually burn. If a hole is made in a water building, you don't get wet, because of the vacuum. Air invades the structure, while the water returns to a holding tank. Katavolos was once standing beneath a dome that imploded, and he didn't get a drop of water on him. Hydronic structures are also beautiful. The stress patterns in the plastic sometimes look like veins in marble.

Katavolos is seventy-nine now. He is tall and thin and has a round face and wispy gray-blond hair. He is the world's only water architect. He has never been very ambitious about building water structures outside the laboratory, although he did build one in the Arizona desert. About ten years ago, he also built a liquid villa, a gazebo, in upstate New York, and left it up for a year, so that he could observe how it behaved through the seasons. Katavolos thinks it is only a matter of time before someone builds a liquid villa. "The front lawn is sacred—

no one can do anything there," he says. "But the back yard has always been experimental. People all over the country have aboveground swimming pools in their yards, so water's not a foreign concept. All the ingredients are here for a Palladian villa—it just costs money to do the first one."

Villas sold in kits is what Katavolos imagines. "Security is the next aesthetic," he says. "Diseases and contaminants can't easily penetrate water. A hydronic structure is perfect for a family with a child who has allergies or asthma. I call it an architectural haven. The air inside is pure. Nothing grows in the water, because it's run through filters and also the vacuum. You can swim in a pool inside one, and there won't be any insects to bother you. If you want to, you can just take it down and put it away. There is now a plastic guaranteed for twenty years, and if you think that you have to paint your house every six years and put a new roof on every ten, that's not such a bad proposition."

The decades Katavolos has spent in the basement at Pratt he regards as having been necessary. "Mies van der Rohe used to say, 'We don't invent a new architecture every Monday morning,' " Katavolos says. "It takes about thirty-three years to refine a new thing. It's not a young man's work. You need to agonize thirty or forty years before you let it out of the house."

*—Alec Wilkinson*

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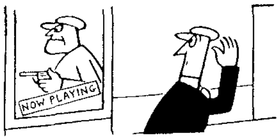
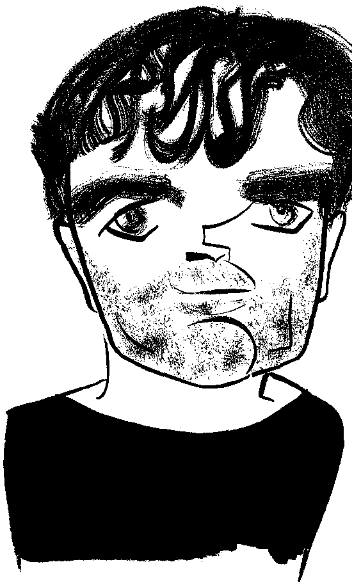
## THE BIG TIME
## PLEASANTVILLE



Usually, Peter Dinklage plays ghoulish or zany character roles, in dream sequences or crime capers; he's four feet five inches tall—a dwarf. But in "The Station Agent," which opens next week, he gets to be the leading man, a downhearted train buff named Fin who inherits an abandoned railway depot in a New Jersey town and, through various contrivances, comes to find fellowship, if not love, exactly, among a couple of lonesome regular-height strangers. Last winter at the Sundance Film Festival, "The Station Agent," which was made for less than a million dollars, won the audience and screenwriting awards and was bought by Miramax. Now there is talk of Dinklage becoming a star, though it is unclear if this is because he is a curiosity or because he is good.

Part of being a leading man in such a picture is being driven and flown all over the place, to festivals and screenings and parties, in the pursuit of what is known as word-of-mouth, and so one night last week Dinklage found himself in the back seat of a Town Car, hurtling up the F.D.R. Drive, en route to Pleasantville, in Westchester County. He was scheduled to do a Q.&A. session immediately following a screening of the film at the Jacob Burns Film Center, a renovated old theatre that has become a tristate-area staging ground for independent films.



*Peter Dinklage*

Dinklage was wearing his seat belt; his feet dangled above the floor. He is thirty-four and has tousled brown hair and is known to his friends as Dink, or the Dink, which he doesn't seem to mind. "Yesterday, I was in Atlanta," he said. "They had me in a hotel room doing interviews. Tomorrow, I fly to Paris, and the next day to Spain, for the San Sebástian film festival. Then Aspen, and then Rio de Janeiro, some film-festival thing. There are actors who do this for movies they hate. Must be rough."

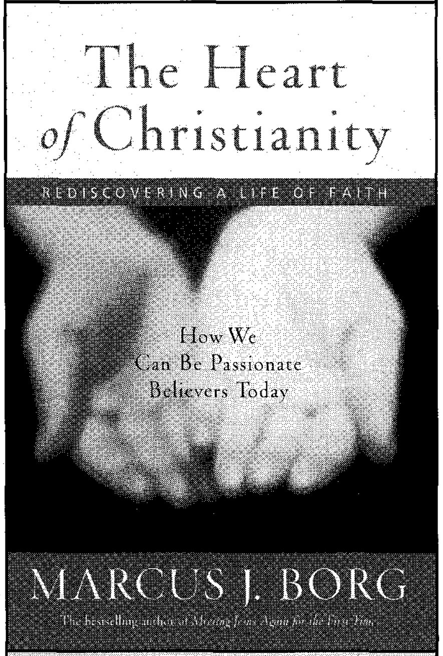
First, though, there had to be Mamaroneck, which does not have a film festival and is not really on the way to Pleasantville. "Is O.K. if you are fifteen-twenty minutes late?" the driver, Renado, asked. It emerged, slowly, that Renado needed to stop by his house, in Mamaroneck, where Davy, another driver, who might or might not know the way to Pleasantville, was waiting to take over. Dinklage conveyed, gently, that late was not good. "What, do you have a dinner reservation or something?" Renado asked. The car navigated darkened streets, stopped for gas. More dark streets, then the driver switch, with maps: serious lateness began to take hold. "This happens to me," Dinklage said. "Some people don't let these kinds of things happen. I'm a pushover, or something."

Among the questions he said that he has been asked recently, in interviews and at Q.&A. sessions, are the following: Do you get roles that aren't written specifically for dwarves? ("Yeah, sometimes.") What kind of women are attracted to you? ("Do you think I'd be asked that if I weren't a dwarf? I was, like, 'Women with one eye in the middle of their forehead.' ") And, What was the budget? ("Everyone always asks that.") Among film geeks, he is known for his role as Tito in the dream sequence in Tom DiCillo's "Living in Oblivion" ("That movie spoiled me"), and he is often stopped on the street by hip-hop fans, who recognize him as the Building Manager in "Bullet," a Tupac Shakur vehicle. Next spring, he hopes to play the title role in a Lincoln Center production of a musical about Toulouse-Lautrec.

Pleasantville! Davy pulled off the parkway, and a cell phone was deployed for Film Center directions. A young woman greeted Dinklage at the door and hooked him up to a microphone. The Dink rushed into the theatre. The screening had ended ten minutes before. His host and interlocutor, a film critic named Marshall Fine, was waiting for him onstage, next to an empty chair. On the steps to the stage, Dinklage dropped into a thirsty-man-in-the-desert crawl, a lampoon of lateness and tortuous journeys. This got a laugh. Then, suddenly, he was in his seat, facing the people, feet dangling, ready to tell them whatever it was they wanted to know.

*—Nick Paumgarten*

Longing for a Relevant, Thoughtful Faith?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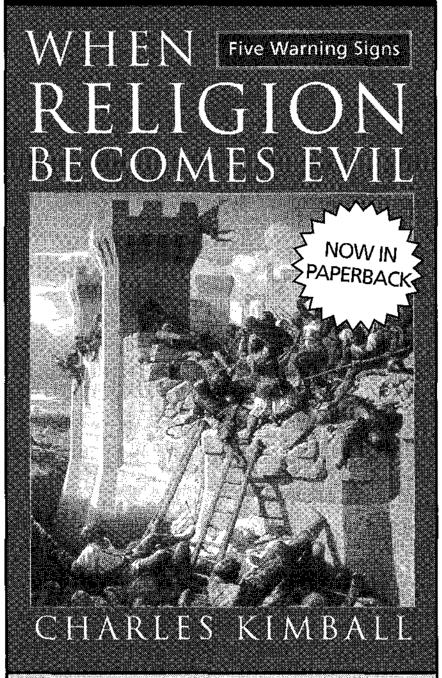

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## THE POLITICAL SCENE

# STRONGMAN

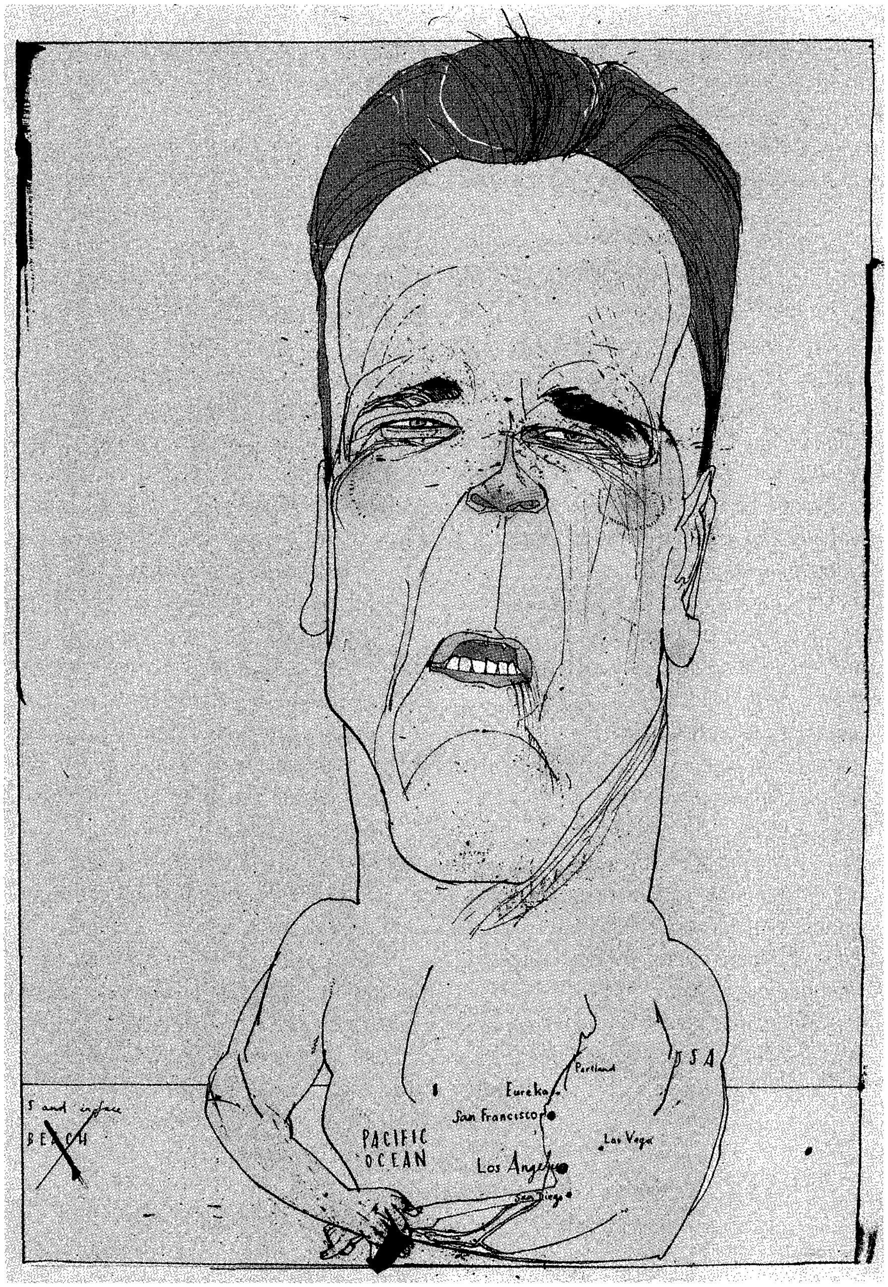
*Arnold Schwarzenegger and California's recall race.*

### BY HENDRIK HERTZBERG

A political campaign, like an act of love or a basketball game or a night at the opera, has an arc that is shaped by the participants' knowledge of how long it is going to last. As far as the California recall is concerned, last Monday's decision by a three-judge panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in San Francisco, ordering the postponement of the whole thing from October 7th to God knows when, blew that knowledge straight to hell. The candidates were running flat out in a race that was supposed to be all homestretch. Each of the four major ones could see things going his way. The incumbent Governor, Gray Davis, was picking up speed. Bill Clinton was in the state, campaigning for him; Al Gore was on his way; one by one, starting with Howard Dean, the Democratic Presidential candidates were arriving to pledge fealty. The polls still showed a majority for yanking the Governor, but the gap was narrowing. So Davis was hopeful. In the other part of the election, which counts if Davis is recalled, the self-selected, not quite official Democratic candidate, Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante, was ahead of the pack. He was drawing thirty per cent in the polls, five points ahead of his nearest rival. So Bustamante was hopeful. That nearest rival, Arnold Schwarzenegger, was raising cash at a tremendous clip, attracting big crowds, consolidating the support of the state's Republican establishment, and flooding the airwaves with thirty-second spots. His campaign was confident that the other important Republican in the race would eventually withdraw. So Schwarzenegger was hopeful. That other Republican, Tom McClintock, a state senator, owns the hearts of California's movement conservatives, who for a decade have dominated the Party's activist core and primary electorate. McClintock didn't have much money, but he was gaining ground. In both of the state's leading polls, the Field Poll and the Los Angeles *Times* Poll, he was up by half, to thirteen per cent and eighteen per cent, respectively. So McClintock was hopeful. The two visible candidates on the "progressive" left, the columnist Arianna Huffington and the Green Party's Peter Camajo, were not hopeful—not about winning, anyway—but they seemed to be enjoying themselves. The media were having a ball; the voters, to all appearances, were engaged. Then, boom. *Electio interrupta.*

What does it all mean, politically speaking? Who knows? If the ruling (in which the word "chad" appears eighteen times, and which makes sly use of the Supreme Court's logic in Bush v. Gore) stands, it will supposedly help Davis, because there will be more time for him to make his case, which is more nuanced than the case for throwing him out, and hurt Schwarzenegger, because there will be more time for him to make a mistake, and maybe hurt Bustamante, too, because the more voters learn about him the less they seem to like him. But if the ruling stands and the recall is rescheduled for March 2nd, the date of the Presidential primary, that will supposedly help Bustamante as well as Davis, because the Democrats' lively Presidential contest will draw their voters to the polls. But if the ruling is overturned by the United States Supreme Court, that will supposedly help the Democrats, too, because it will stoke their anger with memories of 2000. But if the ruling is overturned by the Ninth Circuit itself (a more likely outcome, according to some), it will help the Republicans, because they have already been energized by rage.

No matter whom any of this craziness is good for or bad for, the decision discombobulated everybody. No one had the slightest idea what to do. So everybody just kept running straight ahead at top speed, like Looney Tunes characters who've just gone off a cliff. Their feet are churning furiously, but the vertigo is



*Megalomania usually leads to hubris, but not in Schwarzenegger's case. Not so far.*

DAVID HUGHES

something fierce. In such a situation, might it not be an advantage to be a master of special effects?

On October 8, 1993—a day short of exactly ten years before the originally scheduled date of California's recall election—one of Sylvester Stallone's better movies opened wide at area theatres. In "Demolition Man," Stallone played a Los Angeles cop, cryogenically frozen around the turn of the century as punishment for a bum rap, who is thawed out in the year 2032 to give chase to his similarly thawed-out criminal nemesis. He teams up with Sandra Bullock, a new-style nicey-nice police officer. As she is showing him around the L.A. of the future—where everything is tidy, corporate, and bland—he does a double take when she mentions the "Schwarzenegger Presidential Library." Decades before, Bullock explains perkily, Arnold Schwarzenegger became so popular that the American people waived the technicalities and made him their maximum leader.

This was satire, not prognostication. Either way, though, it appears, at the moment, to be right on schedule. The big technicality, of course, is a clause in Article II, Section 1, of the Constitution—the one that states, "No Person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President." On July 10th, Senator Orrin Hatch, Republican of Utah, quietly introduced what he hopes will become the twenty-eighth amendment:

> A person who is a citizen of the United States, who has been for 20 years a citizen of the United States, and who is otherwise eligible to the Office of President, is not ineligible to that Office by reason of not being a native born citizen of the United States.

As it happens, Arnold Schwarzenegger (who, according to the *Deseret News*, Hatch's home-town paper, is both a "pal" and a "fund-raising helper" of the Senator's) became a citizen of the United States precisely twenty years ago. Hatch is the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, where constitutional amendments originate. His amendment stands a good chance of going to the states, thirty-eight of which would be needed for ratification. It would certainly pass in the states where Latino and other foreign-born citizens, now twelve million strong, are concentrated, and legislators elsewhere might support it as a gesture toward the "nation of immigrants" catechism of America's civic religion. Even so, like any constitutional amendment, it's a long shot. On the other hand, there are those who think that it doesn't really matter—who think that Schwarzenegger, amendment or no amendment, will find a way. George Butler, the filmmaker-photographer who chronicled the big man's rise to fame, told me recently with a chuckle, "If you think Arnold can be stopped by a few phrases on a piece of parchment, well, you just don't know Arnold."

But that's getting ahead of the game. First, there is the little matter of naming rights to the Schwarzenegger Gubernatorial Library.

Arnold Schwarzenegger was supposed to be the Grand Marshal of the Mexican Independence Day parade the other Sunday in East Los Angeles. "You are a huge icon for the Spanish community," the Comité Mexicano Cívico Patriótico had said in its invitation to him, a month earlier. But then the California legislature passed a bill making undocumented aliens eligible for driver's licenses, and Governor Davis signed it, and Schwarzenegger denounced it. So he was abruptly disinvited, not just from the Grand Marshalship but also from the parade itself, and was left to find something else to do.

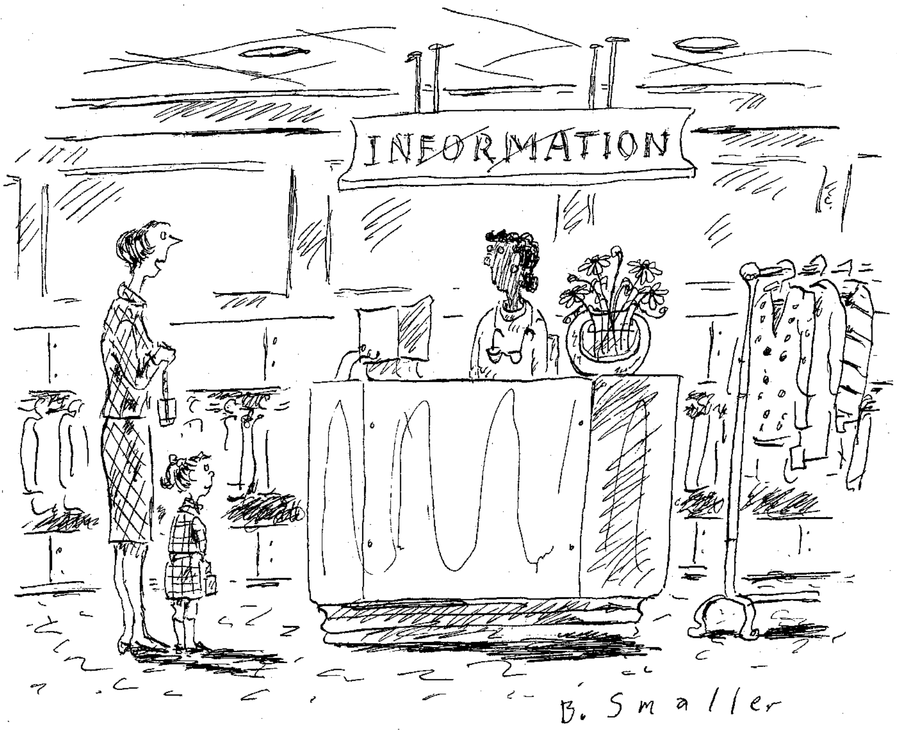
The something else was a kids' softball tournament under the aegis of an after-school program called the Inner-City Games Los Angeles. It was a campaign event that would have been inconceivable for any other candidate. For one thing, the Inner-City Games Los Angeles (Arnold Schwarzenegger, executive commissioner) has been funded by the Inner-City Games Foundation (Arnold Schwarzenegger, chairman), to which a major donor has been the Hummer division of General Motors (Arnold Schwarzenegger, "unofficial spokesman"). Even leaving that aside, no other candidate could command the attention of eight camera crews and a score or so representatives of the state, national, and international press for what was essentially an exercise in baby-kissing.

The boys and girls and parents and coaches were mostly Latino, but the event did not take place in anything recognizable as an inner city. Little Lake Park, in Santa Fe Springs, a light-industrial suburb half an hour east of Santa Monica, is a pleasant facility: twenty acres of well-manicured ballfields, edged by tall palms and a capacious grove of shade trees, which shelters a tidy cinder-block cube that serves as a V.F.W. post. It was a beautiful day: shocking-blue sky, light breeze, crystalline air. Shortly after noon, a small convoy of cars arrived, led by an enormous black S.U.V. (a G.M.C. Yukon this time, not a Hummer), and Schwarzenegger, obscured by a vibrating scrum of cameras, cops, and kids, dashed into the building.

Whenever there was movement near the building's door, the kids craned and jumped and whooped, and when at last the door swung open and the star emerged the screaming began. "Arnold! Arnold!" "I see him!" "Arnold!" "There he is!" Trailed by three unusually large security men wearing navy-blue blazers and corkscrew ear buds, Schwarzenegger emerged and headed for the rope line. He looked like—well, he stood out from his surroundings like no other political candidate I've ever seen. He fairly popped out. He looked like a vanilla sundae topped with raspberry sauce. His hair was a rich shade of red that is seldom encountered in nature, and never atop the head of a fifty-six-year-old man. The tan of his skin veered toward orange, and it was dark enough to show through his shirt, which was of the finest, whitest, thinnest cotton voile, delicately ribbed. The cuffs were rolled to mid-forearm, showing a huge Rolex studded with buttons. His trousers were soft and cream-colored. His sneakers were Nikes. His boxy head loomed. His grinning mouth was the shape of a reclining figure eight, fuller at the edges than at the center, like the mouth of a character in a Japanese anime.

On the platform, Schwarzenegger kept it nonpolitical. "This is a great celebration today because today we are not only here to celebrate sports events but today we are also here to celebrate our twelfth anniversary of the Inner-City Games Los Angeles," he said, in the singsongy, Austrian-accented voice familiar to every moviegoer. "I remember when we started, twelve years ago. I was very fortunate that at that time I was with the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, and I was travelling all over the country to all fifty states, promoting health and fitness for all our youngsters. And one day I was sitting in President Bush's office. It was in 1990. And he said to me, 'Arnold, while you are travelling around the states to all fifty states, make sure to get to as many inner-city schools as possible, because this is where the problems lie. We need to pay more attention to our kids in our inner cities.' And I promised the President I would do that."

The speech done, Schwarzenegger reached into a box of T-shirts and tossed them one by one into the crowd. Then he handshook his way along another line of kids and ducked back into the V.F.W. building, where the press was waiting for a promised "availability."



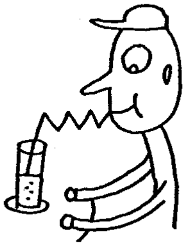
*"Could you direct us to the pre-pre-pre-teen department?"*

California's recall mechanism was adopted in 1911, at the crest of the great middle-class reform movement known as Progressivism, which, the following year, produced the Presidential candidacies of both Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt. Progressivism found its purest expression in California, during the Governorship of Hiram Johnson, a maverick Republican. Under Johnson, California wrote into its constitution not only the recall, which allows voters to remove elected officials before their terms have expired, but also the initiative, which allows voters to pass laws, and the referendum, which allows them to repeal them. The initiative and the referendum have played an important part in California history, especially since 1978, when the passage of Proposition 13 rolled back and capped property taxes, commercial and residential alike, and began the long decline in California's education system and public services. The recall has been much less used. Until this year, no attempt to recall a Governor, or any other statewide elected official, had ever succeeded in getting as far as the ballot.

The recall is radically democratic in spirit and radically faulty in design. Its ballot asks a two-part question. The first part calls for a simple yes or no answer: Do you want to remove the incumbent? The second part is multiple choice: If the current officeholder is removed (and regardless of whether you just voted to remove or retain him), which of the people on the following list do you prefer as his replacement? Getting on the ballot takes just sixty-five valid voter signatures and a check for thirty-five hundred dollars, making it a remarkably cheap advertising medium. (A half-page ad in the San Francisco *Chronicle* would cost ten times more.) The wonder is that only a hundred and thirty-five people bothered to buy themselves a spot.

Part one of the ballot is determined by simple majority. Part two is determined by simple plurality—that is, the winning candidate is the one who gets more votes than any one of the others. In theory, then, if the recall passes by a hair and the vote for the replacement is distributed evenly enough, an incumbent with 49.9 per cent of the vote could be "defeated" by a challenger with less than one per cent. In practice, of course, that's not quite how it's going to work; a handful of the replacement candidates will tally most of the votes. Nevertheless, it is a near-certainty that, if the recall passes, the winner will be someone preferred by fewer voters than the number who will have expressed a preference for retaining the incumbent. There's an old political saw that you can't beat someone with no one. But one of the peculiarities of the California recall process is that the official who is being recalled cannot run to replace himself. So you can, precisely, beat someone with no one. Only then do the voters choose who the no one will be.

Schwarzenegger started out expecting to win a sizable chunk of the Latino vote. His movies are famously popular with young Hispanic men. (*Hasta la vista*, baby.) Through his charitable work, he has cultivated an image as someone who cares about poor Latinos, and in his business and political activities he has certainly not neglected well-heeled ones. His own coming-to-America story is central to his appeal. But, like every other politician in California, he's been whipsawed by the politics of immigration, which, besides being an actual substantive issue, is a sinkhole of emotion, prejudice, and demagoguery.



As the campaign intensified, the sinkhole reopened in the form of the bill in the California legislature to allow illegal aliens to obtain driver's licenses, as had been the case before 1994. The bill passed on a party-line vote, and on September 5th Davis, who had vetoed a similar bill less than a year before, signed it. On balance, the new law is probably good public policy. There are reasonable arguments on both sides. The politics of it, though, are a straightforward matter of pandering to constituencies. Davis could not afford to anger the organized Latino community; Schwarzenegger could not afford to anger the organized conservative movement. It was a deal breaker for both groups. (The only candidate whose position on the new law was manifestly dictated by its merits was the moderate Republican technocrat Peter Ueberroth, the organizer of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. He came out for it. A few days later, he dropped out of the race.)

Schwarzenegger was already in a bit of trouble with the state's largest minority. His political mentor is Pete Wilson, Governor throughout most of the nineteen-nineties, who, in 1994, supported Proposition 187, a ballot initiative aimed at cutting off social benefits to undocumented aliens and barring their children from public schools. Prop 187 passed, and it left California Latinos—who usually make up around ten per cent of the electorate, a proportion that is bound to increase (they are a third of the population)—thoroughly alienated from the Republican Party. Wilson is today a co-chairman of Schwarzenegger's campaign, and Schwarzenegger's staff consists largely of former Wilson people. To their annoyance, their old boss went on television and pointed out to the world that Arnold had voted for Prop 187. Most of Prop 187 has been thrown out by the courts, and Schwarzenegger has made it clear that he has no desire to revive it. "I would never stand in the way of any child going to school," he said last year. But the reminder hurt.

Inside the V.F.W. building, the crews set up their cameras. There was a podium, flanked by furled American and California flags, and a blue curtain to hide the cinder-block wall. The reporters all shouted their questions at once, like in a movie. Most of them touched on immigration and Latinos. The answers were a fair sample of Arnold off the cuff.

"Everyone knows what I stand for," Schwarzenegger said, to a question about the withdrawn invitation. "I want to reach out to Latinos, and not just because of the vote. It's not all about votes. It's like, you know, that I feel sad by this situation, that someone is trying to make me look like I am anti-Latino, when I've done four movies in Mexico. And every opportunity I get, when there is a unique kind of location or something, I say to the production people, 'This is where we have to shoot—in Mexico.' Like 'Collateral Damage,' 'Conan the Destroyer,' 'Total Recall,' 'Predator'—all those movies were down there, because it's a great place to shoot. Great workmanship down there. So it's the wrong way of painting me, and it's also wrong to say that because I want to reach out to the leaders and help them, especially those that come over here and English is their second language. That's why I'm doing these after-school programs to build them up, so it's kind of sad—not only because of the vote but just in general because that's not me."

Schwarzenegger had had one good break that day: Davis had been stupid enough to joke to a supporter, in the presence of a reporter for the Sacramento *Bee*, that anyone who can't pronounce California shouldn't be Governor of it. Schwarzenegger waited patiently to be asked about this, and then he unleashed his sound bite for the evening news: "He doesn't like the way I say the word 'California' because I say 'Cal*ee*fornia' rather than 'Cal*uh*fornia.' But there's plenty of other words that he doesn't like. He doesn't like 'lost jobs.' He doesn't like that word. He doesn't like 'blackouts.' He doesn't like 'energy crisis.' And he definitely doesn't like 'recall.'" (As was widely noted the next day, Schwarzenegger's pronunciation is actually closer to the original Spanish than is Davis's. Davis eventually issued an apology, though only after the state Senate voted, 19–2, to demand one.)

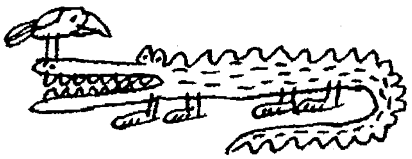
Perhaps as a reminder that the occasion was a softball tournament, someone asked, "You go into politics, even though you're a millionaire—why do you need all this?"

"I feel in my gut that I want to make a difference," Schwarzenegger said, with something like relief. "I feel I could not just continue worrying what will happen to my career, all my millions of dollars, that kind of thing, this beautiful life. There's a time when you say, 'Everything I've got—my whole career, everything—is because of California.' I came here to the Mecca of bodybuilding, and I became a bodybuilding champion. I was here at the Mecca of entertainment, you know, even though everyone said, 'With your accent and with your body and with this name, Schwarzenschnitzel or whatever it is, you know, you will never make it in the movie business.' I became the highest entertainer—the highest-paid actor, period. And, also, I think that the businesses that I have created here, even my family, my four wonderful children and my wife—all here in California. So everything that I've got in life is from California, and therefore it is time to give back."

"Gotta go!" an aide shouted, but one last questioner persisted. "How do you equate your situation coming here with immigrants who are suffering trying to get here?"

"When I came here, I made sixty dollars a week," Schwarzenegger replied. "Sixty dollars a week—and I was going out and doing bricklaying jobs. So I grew up with my hands. I struggled. Many times I struggled. 'Where's my next food coming from? How can I afford the food supplements that I need to be a bodybuilding champion?' Because, remember, bodybuilding was nowhere to be found as a sport then. It wasn't even an officially recognized sport until 1971. So I started on the bottom and slowly worked my way up—with working, with saving money, with going out to strongman exhibitions and all that stuff, and posing exhibitions, doing seminars, and going to school, educating myself. I wasn't even allowed to go to school full time. I took two classes here, two classes there, because I still had a visitor's visa, and then I was applying for a working permit. When you apply for a working permit, you're not allowed to have a student visa, and all these complications. I went through the entire thing that everyone else goes through—except I didn't have anyone there lobbying for me or for Austrians. I struggled, and that's why I can relate to the pain and all the hard work, the struggles that they're going through. There's no one that can relate to it better than me, because I have come through it."

The Rosetta stone of Schwarzeneggerology is generally considered to be a collection of films and books produced by George Butler, usually in collaboration with the writer Charles Gaines: the 1974 book "Pumping Iron: The Art and Sport of Bodybuilding"; the groundbreaking documentary film that followed, in 1977; and two retrospective productions, the book "Arnold Schwarzenegger: A Portrait" (1990) and the twenty-fifth-anniversary film "Iron and Beyond/Raw Iron," put together by the Cinemax cable network last year and containing outtakes from the original "Pumping Iron" film and documentary footage shot in the aftermath of its release. The collection focusses on a crucial period in Schwarzenegger's young manhood: his rise from relative obscurity as a freak-show muscleman to the cusp of global fame, via the film itself and the brilliant promotional campaign that preceded and followed it, which included a wildly successful 1976 bodybuilding show at the Whitney Museum ("Articulate Muscle: The Body as Art") and a deliberate, and also successful, effort to make Arnold briefly the toast of New York café society. "Pumping Iron," released when Arnold was twenty-nine, is the first film whose credits carry the words "Starring Arnold Schwarzenegger." (In 1970, when he was twenty-three, he had had the title role in the legendarily ghastly "Hercules Goes Bananas"—but as "Arnold Strong," a one-off name apparently adopted for comic contrast with that of his co-star, Arnold Stang, an actor well known at the time for playing four-eyed, squeaky-voiced pencil-necks.)



As "Pumping Iron" suggests, the resemblances between Schwarzenegger's experience as an immigrant and the experience of a typical Mexican farmworker are approximate at best. When Schwarzenegger came to the United States, in 1968, his struggle was not very desperate. He was brought here by a muscle-magazine publisher. He had already won the titles of Junior Mr. Europe, Mr. Europe, Best Built Man in Europe, Mr. Universe (amateur), and Mr. Universe (professional). He did not require the services of an Austrian equivalent of La Raza or LULAC in order to survive. He may not have always known where his next food was coming from, but he knew it was coming.

In the "Pumping Iron" series, which chronicles events leading up to and including the Mr. Olympia contest of 1975, there are intimations that Schwarzenegger's ultimate goal, absurd as it would have seemed at the time, was power. "I was always dreaming about very powerful people—dictators and things like that," he soliloquizes at one point in the original film. "I was just always impressed by people who could be remembered for hundreds of years or even, like Jesus, being for thousands of years remembered." In "Raw Iron," he recounts another dream: "Me being a king and standing on top of a mountain—and there was no room left for anybody else up there, O.K.? Just for me." Later, a fellow-bodybuilder teases, "Arnold, when are you running for President?" He shoots back, "When Nixon gets impeached." And in "A Portrait" Butler recounts a conversation he had in a taxi with the actress Candice Bergen a few months after the Whitney show. Bergen is insisting that bodybuilding, and Arnold, has peaked. "I disagree," Butler replies. "It's here to stay, and Arnold is going to be the Governor of California one day." (Bergen, hooting with laughter, retorts, "And one day Ronald Reagan will be President.")

What comes through above all, however, is a sense of Schwarzenegger's indomitable will. That will is manifested not only in his spooky ability to sculpt his own body and in his outlandish (at the time) vision of himself as a man of destiny but also in his total, and appar-

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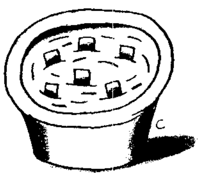
ently effortless, psychological domination of his fellow-musclemen—the way he intimidates and tames them with his charm, his confidence, his humor, and his obviously superior intelligence. And this domination is not simply instinctual. It is strategic. Everything Arnold does to advance himself (which is to say, everything Arnold does) is carefully thought through by an analytical mind that always looks many steps ahead and is acute and coldly realistic about the strengths and weaknesses of everybody in the game, himself included. Megalomania usually leads to hubris, but not in Arnold's case. Not so far.

Even the fact that, "Arnold Strong" notwithstanding, he retained his name is a marker of his powerful will. By doing it his way, he made it thinkable for others with "funny" names to do it theirs: no Arnold Schwarzenegger, no Renée Zellweger. More important, Schwarzenegger has changed the way people look—in both senses. When "Pumping Iron" first came out, Schwarzenegger and his bodybuilder friends appeared not so much strong and healthy as grotesque and misshapen. Twenty-six years later, bodies like theirs no longer seem in the least monstrous, merely exaggerated. Schwarzenegger opened up our ideal image of the male body in his direction, as surely as the Beatles and their rock-and-roll colleagues opened up our ideas about the permissible range of men's hair styles. Today, a pre-Arnold toga-and-sandals movie star like Victor Mature looks to our Arnold-conditioned eyes like someone in need of a workout. Free weights and weight machines are now part of the exercise regimen of tens of millions of people. People have become more relaxed and less fraught about the male body. Ideas of male beauty have broadened. There is room for the Charles Atlases, and also for the ninety-eight-pound weaklings. This is a kind of liberation, and it is partly Arnold's doing.

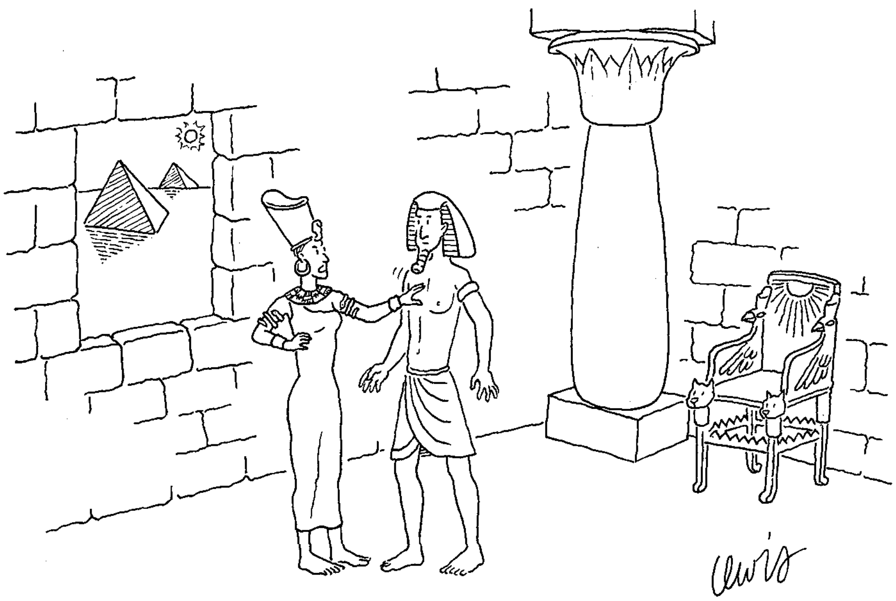


In the now famous 1977 *Oui* magazine interview—the one in which, as the Sacramento *Bee* put it, he "bragged about group sex"—Schwarzenegger does indeed refer to homosexuals as "fags." But "fag" was not then the automatic term of abuse it has since become. Whether it was an expression of conscious contempt or only a bit of insensitive slang depended on context, and here is the context in which Schwarzenegger used it:

> Recently I posed for a gay magazine, which caused much comment. But it doesn't bother me. Gay people are fighting the same kind of stereotyping that bodybuilders are. People have certain misconceptions about them just as they do about us. Well, I have absolutely no hangups about the fag business; though it may bother some bodybuilders, it doesn't bother me at all.

Schwarzenegger certainly set out to break the association in the public mind between bodybuilding and homosexuality, and in that he succeeded. But he did it without pandering to the prejudice against gays. On the contrary, the net effect of his career has probably been to weaken that prejudice. In the recall election, his relatively liberal (for a Republican) attitudes on "social issues"—gay rights, abortion, gun control—impart to him both strength and protection. Those views are shared by a majority of the California electorate; as important, they shield him from the charge of hypocrisy. If Schwarzenegger were a moralist scold of the William Bennett type, then the fact that he has boasted about participating in a gang bang, has commented on the size of his penis, has had himself photographed with a bare-breasted young woman straddling his shoulders (as well as posing nude himself), and has been filmed drawing contentedly on a marijuana cigarette might have done him some serious political damage. As it is, he's almost unscathed. It helps, of course, that the recall process sidesteps formal party primaries, and that the main issues this time are economic and budgetary. His colorful past isn't likely to hurt him with Democrats, who have lately been reminded how he felt about the impeachment of President Clinton. ("We spent one year wasting time because there was a human failure," Schwarzenegger said in an interview in *George*, in 1999. "I was ashamed to call myself a Republican during that period.") For Arnold, politically, Hummers are a bigger threat than hummers.

It also helps that by profession Schwarzenegger is a bodybuilder turned action star. The public is evidently willing to make allowances for actors that it won't make for lawyers or developers, and the California public is hardly more jarred by entertainers in politics than the Iowa public is jarred by farmers in politics. What's new about Schwarzenegger is that he has skipped the usual apprenticeship. In the ten years before Ronald Reagan went to Sacramento, in 1967, he appeared in only one movie—a little-noticed 1964 remake of "The Killers." Schwarzenegger, by contrast, is still a huge international star. On the day he announced his candidacy, August 6th, "Terminator 3" was showing in almost two thousand theatres across the country, and had grossed close to a hundred and fifty million dollars. A decent interval, or any interval, is no longer required.



"What part of oil lamp next to double squiggle over ox don't you understand?"

Gray Davis has portrayed the recall campaign as an attempted right-wing coup, of a piece with the Clinton impeachment, the Florida vote count, and the Texas redistricting steamroller. It's true that the recall effort began within weeks of Davis's inauguration in January, and that the signature-gathering was paid for almost entirely by a conservative Republican congressman, Darrell Issa, who wanted to be Governor himself. (When Schwarzenegger launched his campaign, Issa, in tears, abandoned his.) It's also true that the troubles that have overwhelmed Sacramento are not all, or even mostly, Davis's fault. California's economic woes are mainly a subset of the nation's. The state's job losses have actually been less severe than the national average. As for the chronic budgetary crisis, Davis did little to avoid it, but he is hardly the only culprit. Republican legislators are at least as much to blame; though they are a minority in both the Senate and the Assembly, a constitutional requirement for a two-thirds supermajority to pass a budget gives them effective veto power, which they have used ruthlessly to quash any attempt to tax the rich. And the voters themselves, through measures like Proposition 13, have done their bit to hamstring their elected leaders.

Davis has signed a slew of pioneering legislation, including a law creating a paid-family-leave program (the first in the country), another mandating arbitration for farmworkers when growers refuse to negotiate, another establishing greenhouse-gas pollution controls for motor vehicles, and another protecting stem-cell research. But the impetus has usually come from the legislature, and the Governor has often had to be nudged or threatened along. Davis has no passionate supporters. The staples of his political style have been relentless fund-raising and remorseless attack advertising. His problem now is that he is no longer playing a zero-sum game against a single opponent. How do you do oppo research on the fact that people don't like you? How do you run a negative campaign against the word "yes"?

On the replacement side of the contest, Cruz Bustamante is an affable mediocrity who has drifted upward on a combination of term limits, opportunism, ethnic ticket-balancing, and luck. Harold Meyerson, of the *L.A. Weekly*, calls him "the least charismatic and able of the state's Democratic leaders." Bustamante, whose grasp of substance often seems shaky, has been almost as unwilling as Schwarzenegger to subject himself to sustained questioning, and he has not yet demonstrated any discernible appeal for independents. On the Republican side, McClintock is intelligent and knowledgeable. Last year, he came within a hair of winning a statewide race for controller. But the Governorship is different. Though McClintock knows how to express his hard-right views without rancor, those views put a ceiling on his support, and he doesn't have much more headroom.

If Arnold Schwarzenegger ends up becoming Governor anytime soon (the power passes, if it does, as soon as the election results are certified), it won't be because of the brilliance of his campaign, which, in contrast to his long march through show business, has been cautious and conventional. Like Davis a year ago, he is banking on the haplessness of his opponents. He could have taken advantage of the fact that the recall spared him a Republican primary to make a kind of political Inchon landing, going straight for California's atomized masses of alienated independents and disaffected Democrats; instead, he has chosen to run as a party man, an off-the-shelf moderate-to-conservative Republican. The Progressives who invented the recall were profoundly hostile to the whole idea of political parties. It was part of the Progressive creed that party machines were evil and elections should be nonpartisan. The irony is that, a century later, the result may depend on which of the two traditional parties can enforce more discipline. If the Republicans stay split, Schwarzenegger probably loses. If they don't, he probably wins. Another possibility is that Davis beats the recall but Schwarzenegger comes in first on the replacement side of the ballot. If that happens, Arnold won't get to be Governor this time. But he'll be back. ♦

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### ANNALS OF MEDICINE

# THE BIONIC EYE

*Can scientists use electronic implants to help the blind see?*

### BY JEROME GROOPMAN

When Connie Schoeman was growing up, her family had a country house on a lake in New Hampshire, and she loved to sit outside at night and gaze at the stars. As an undergraduate at Pembroke College in the nineteen-forties, she studied medical technology, and when she moved to California in her twenties she worked at a hospital laboratory. Connie became an expert at identifying parasites and other pathogens in clinical specimens under the microscope. One afternoon, while she was driving, Connie was hit by a car that was backing out of a driveway. "I realized that I didn't see it from the corner of my eye," she told me. An ophthalmologist examined her. Although Connie's central vision was still sufficient for her to continue lab work, her retina was pocked by heavy coal-black deposits. Tests revealed that even with glasses her vision would be no better than 20/200, which meets the legal definition of blindness. She had experienced significant loss of her peripheral field and some loss of her central field. The ophthalmologist diagnosed retinitis pigmentosa, or R.P., an inherited disease in which the rods and cones of the retina degenerate. (The rods and cones convert light into electrical impulses, which are carried by the optic nerve to the brain, where images are formed.) Connie's eyes were otherwise healthy, but with the loss of the rods her peripheral vision and light perception faded, and with the loss of the cones her central vision and color perception atrophied. "Soon I couldn't see the stars," she said. "Then, after a few more years, I couldn't see the moon."

Retinitis pigmentosa occurs in approximately one in every four thousand people, and the disease usually becomes symptomatic in early adulthood. The condition, which grows worse over time, is incurable. When Connie heard her prognosis, she realized that her work with the microscope would be impossible. She eventually went back to school, obtained a master's degree in vocational rehabilitation, and began working for the state of California as a counsellor for the blind. As her own vision deteriorated further, she learned how helpless blind people could feel. "I had to ask to be guided to the ladies' room in a restaurant," she told me. "And if I dropped something, like my keys or cash, I had to search on my hands and knees for it."

Fifteen years ago, Connie lost her vision entirely. She is now seventy-six years old, a compact woman with a lively smile and hair the color of champagne. When I met her, she was dressed in slacks and a beige blouse, and her nails were painted fire-engine red. Last November, Connie volunteered to participate in a research study at the University of Southern California, in Los Angeles, where a device designed to restore some of the vision of R.P. sufferers is being tested. Connie agreed to have an artificial retina—a flexible, wafer-thin square grid of sixteen electrodes—implanted in her right eye. For the surgery, the eye muscles were paralyzed with injections of botulinum toxin. An ophthalmologist made an incision on the eye wall, threaded the electrode strip through the eye, and tacked it to her retina. Wires connected to the strip were buried under the skin near the eye. The wires ran to a magnetic disk sutured to her scalp just above her right ear.

"Here, you can feel it," Connie said, taking my hand and guiding it to the area above her ear. It felt like a small button.

Another piece of the device consisted of a pair of wraparound sunglasses with a miniature camera mounted on the bridge; the camera was attached to a wallet-size computer, which was connected to a coil taped above the ear, over the implanted magnetic disk. Connie put the glasses on, and the camera picked up the ambient light in the room and transmitted it to the coil in an intricate pattern of electrical impulses that were coördinated by the

SAUL STEINBERG, FROM "ALL IN LINE" (1945), © THE SAUL STEINBERG FOUNDATION

minicomputer. Once the impulses reached the coil, they were sent as radio waves to the magnetic disk and ultimately stimulated the electrode grid in Connie's retina. From there, the current passed through the optic nerve to the brain. In a normal eye, the cells of the optic nerve signal the brain according to a sequence known as the neural code. For Connie, that function was governed by proprietary software inside the minicomputer.

It was June, and we were in a laboratory at the university's Doheny Retina Institute, where Dr. Mark Humayun and Dr. Eugene de Juan were conducting the tests. Their research, like that of others in the field, has been highly, often hyperbolically, publicized: in 1999, Stevie Wonder, who has been blind since infancy, appeared on "20/20" with Humayun and talked about the possibility of seeing again. Some foundations that support research on blindness have been deeply concerned; they say that the device could raise false hopes, since it may succeed only where damage to the eyes is limited to the rods and cones.

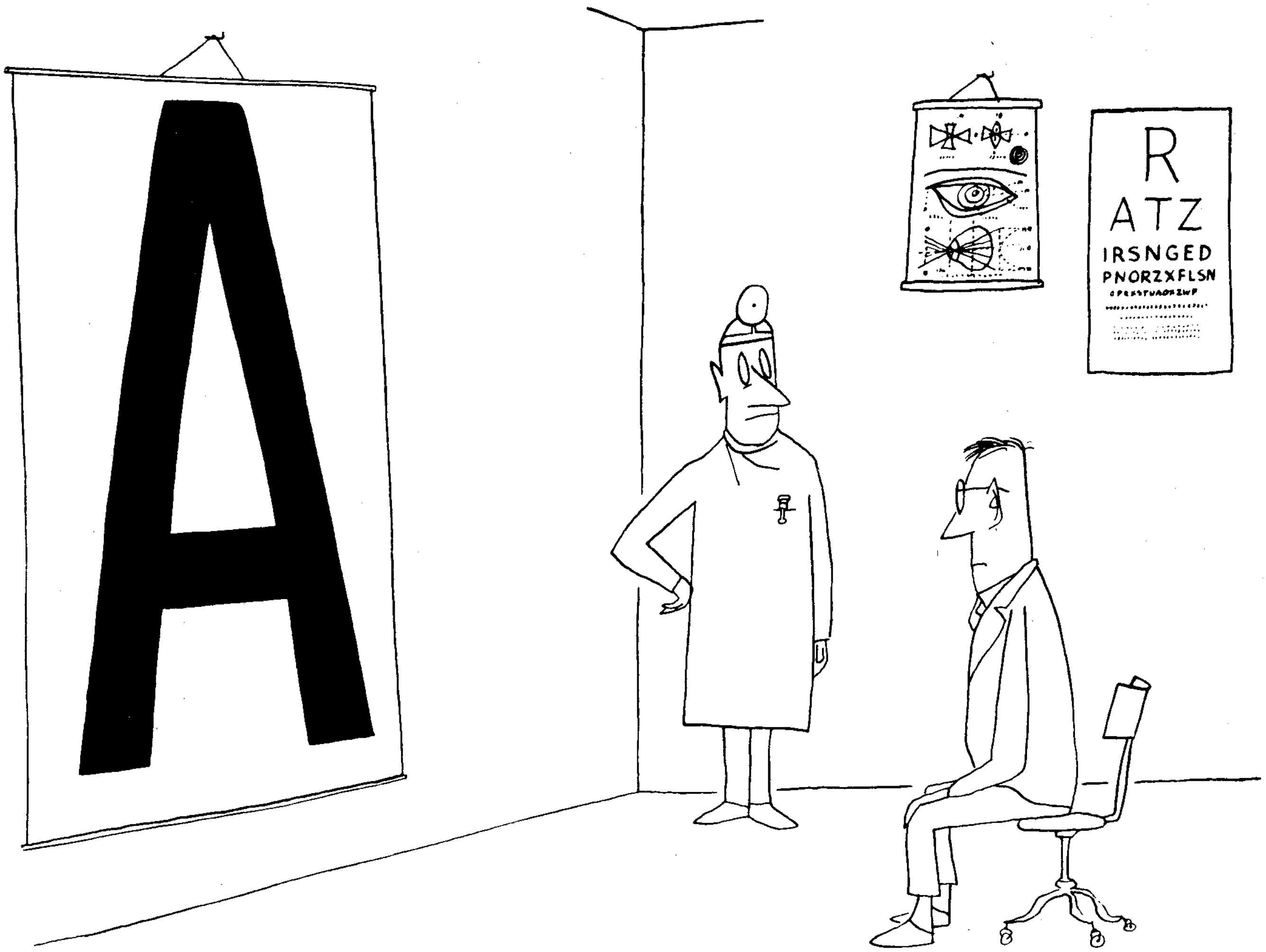
The day I visited the lab, Connie was beginning to learn how to use the device, and a group of researchers were clustered around her. They positioned Connie at a desk in front of an open black wooden box that resembled a theatrical stage. A researcher placed a white plastic-foam cup in the center of the box. "Now scan in front of you," he instructed Connie. She rotated her head slowly from right to left.

A laptop computer was connected to the device's minicomputer; on the laptop's screen was a representation of the grid that had been implanted in Connie's eye. Activation of the electrodes by ambient light picked up by the camera would be reflected on the laptop screen. When the camera aperture was pointed toward the plastic-foam cup, part of the grid on the laptop display went from gray to white.

Connie's head moved several inches past the cup, and then she exclaimed, "There it is!" The researchers noted the delay. There is a temporal dimension to the neural code as well as a spatial one, and the minicomputer had to be reprogrammed to correct the lag in time between when the camera saw the cup and when Connie's brain interpreted the image.

The researchers then shifted the cup to a far corner of the box, about two feet away from Connie. She scanned right to left and then left to right. "Nothing," she said. The researchers told her to try again. She still couldn't locate it. "We need to practice more," one of them said reassuringly.

The F.D.A. has approved use of the device outside a laboratory environment, but the university's internal review board hasn't yet followed suit, so after an hour Connie took off the glasses and detached the coil from behind her ear. She was exhausted, and her husband brought her a cup of coffee, which he guided to her lips. I asked Connie what she saw with the apparatus. "I see a string of



*An artificial retina would need to have both the hardware to process information and the software to communicate with the brain.*

lights, like the kind you drape on a Christmas tree," she said. "But they aren't colored, just bright white." The first time Connie used the device, she could hardly contain herself. "The excitement hasn't worn off when I locate something," she told me.

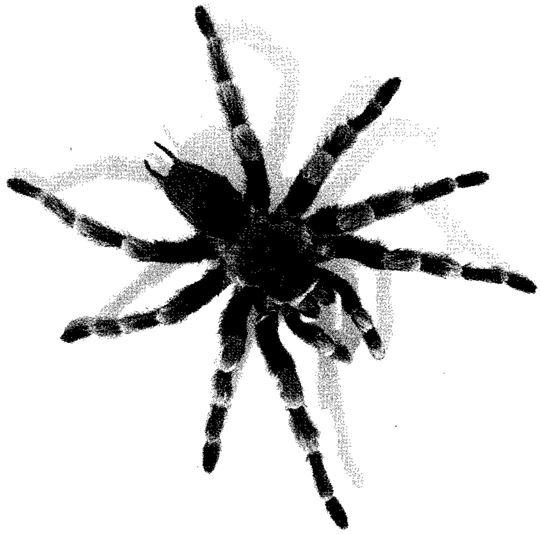
The idea for an electronic device that would restore vision in patients like Connie occurred to de Juan and Humayun fifteen years ago. De Juan was a young professor of ophthalmology at Duke University who spent much of his time operating on people to repair detached retinas; Humayun was his student. A minuscule two-and-a half-millimetre tack had just been developed to facilitate these repairs, and de Juan and Humayun wondered whether the tacks could be used to safely anchor electrodes onto the delicate tissues at the back of the eye. "I loved the idea," said Humayun, who went on to get a doctoral degree in biomedical engineering to further their work. As it happened, de Juan's neighbor in Durham, North Carolina, was an executive at a government-sponsored consortium of companies working in the semiconductor field. De Juan and Humayun collaborated with the consortium's engineers to build prototype electrode grids. For several years, they tested the prototypes in animals, some of which had inherited retinal diseases similar to human R.P. De Juan and Humayun moved to Johns Hopkins, and after nine years there, in 2000, took the project to the University of Southern California. A graduate student of de Juan's from Johns Hopkins, Dr. Robert Greenberg, co-founded the company Second Sight to manufacture and market the device, which he did with the support of private investors who had developed cochlear implants.

The market for a successful prosthesis would be significant. Although R.P. is relatively rare, macular degeneration, another disorder that involves rods and cones, is common. About one and a half million of the sixty million people who are older than fifty-five suffer from advanced age-related macular degeneration that causes severe loss of vision that cannot be corrected by glasses. By 2020, two and a half million people could be affected.

De Juan and Humayun knew that the retina works more like a computer than like a camera. Its hundred and thirty million rods and cones register light and compress the analog signal into electrical pulses carried as digital signals by more than a million neurons in the optic nerve. These digital signals are received and interpreted by a computer of even greater complexity, the brain.

An artificial retina, they realized, would have to be equipped with both the hardware to process electrical information and the software to communicate with the brain. Heavy demands would be placed on this hardware and software. People see over a wide spectrum of wavelengths and various illuminations, and process ambient light as color, shading, and depth. To replicate this process, the computer would have to work very fast and process vast amounts of data. "There

{*Common Name: Spiders. Habitat: The Amex. Genus: S&P 500.*}



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are roughly 1.2 million fibres in the optic nerve, each connected to a neuron, which at maximum can fire off two hundred pulses per second," Humayun told me. "So one eye can send the brain up to two hundred megabits per second."

The design of a retinal prosthesis presented even more substantial obstacles. The electrical energy generated by such a device must not give off so much heat that it burns the sensitive tissues of the eye. The wires and connections need to be made of inert and durable metals that resist the salty vitreous liquid of the eye without irritating its sensitive structures. Moreover, the eye, a one-inch ball, moves back and forth rapidly and exerts powerful torque forces on anything that is attached to the retina. And the retina is roughly a quarter of a millimetre thick, its resilience similar to that of a piece of wet Kleenex. This device would have to be both strong and flexible, able to move fluidly with the eye without tearing it apart.

In the late nineteen-eighties, as de Juan and Humayun embarked on their retinal device, Dr. Joseph Rizzo, a neuro-ophthalmologist working at Harvard's Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary and the director of the Center for Innovative Visual Rehabilitation at the Boston Veterans Administration Medical Center, and John Wyatt, a professor of electrical engineering at M.I.T., began experimenting toward the same goal.

Rizzo and Wyatt placed temporary electrode grids on the retinas of five blind subjects with R.P. and on one person with a normal retina, who was going to lose her eye because of a surrounding cancer. They then sent electricity to the grid through a wire—a simple experiment in comparison with de Juan and Humayun's camera, computer, and magnetic disk. Contrary to their expectations, however, Rizzo and Wyatt found that there is not always a one-to-one correlation between stimulating the retina and causing a visual percept. A single stimulus could result in a cluster of small percepts; an array of stimuli did not always lead to the perception of an anticipated pattern; and stimuli in the shape of letters, say "T" and "L," did not yield recognition. This last test was particularly confounding, since even the patient whose retina was healthy couldn't identify the letters. "That these odd findings were reproducible shows that the real problem is our own inability to figure out what is going on," Rizzo said. "Creating vision is a herculean task. We decided to look at each building block from a single cell to a cluster of cells and then to examine how that cluster influences what you see." De Juan and Humayun, initially unaware of Wyatt and Rizzo's work, leaped ahead, putting a permanent device into the eye and stimulating it with a camera to see what would happen.

Three patients with R.P., including Connie Schoeman, are participating in de Juan and Humayun's study. Harold Churchey, a seventy-six-year-old man, was the first. He has had the device for eighteen months. It had been more than fifty years since he had any vision in the implanted eye. I watched a

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videotape of the first time that Harold was tested with the retinal prosthesis at the Doheny institute. Like Connie, he scanned an image against a black background. "I see a line going up and down and I see a line going across," he told Humayun. "And they meet at the bottom." Harold was looking at a large white block letter "L." "He couldn't tell it was an 'L,' " Humayun said. "He couldn't piece it together. But how many letters have that configuration? We were sitting on the edge of our chairs, waiting for him to say it was the letter 'L.' But he couldn't figure out the image. We ended up giving him the answer. At that moment, we realized that, for the device to be of any use, people's brains needed to be retrained."

Harold practiced with the device twice a week for the first three months. I watched another tape of his testing after the training. The letters "H," "L," "I," and "C" were sequentially projected in white against a black background in groups of ten. He scanned each group and was asked to identify the letters in order. The likelihood that he could do this by guessing was one in forty. Nine out of ten times, he scanned the sequence correctly.

Then, during a two-day testing session earlier this month, the researchers allowed Harold to venture outside the laboratory with a more portable version of the apparatus. They wanted to see how he would get along with the implant in the real world.

On the first day, they led him into a conference room on the third floor of the institute. Heavy wood panelling ran along the lower half of the walls, and a set of large windows looked out on trees and a clear blue sky. At the front of the room was a pair of oak doors. The researchers seated Harold in the middle of the room and instructed him to orient himself. "I turned my head to the right and all the electrodes came on," he later recalled. "I said, 'I presume that's a window.' And they said, 'Yes.' I was well pleased."

With the simple array of electrodes, Harold was able to identify the heavy double doors or tell, for instance, where the molding on the wall ended and the more reflective white surface began. "I tried to find a dark spot, and that would probably be a door or a cupboard," he said.

The next day, the researchers took Harold outside. This was the first time that a patient had ever left the building with the device. The researchers asked him to look at traffic and describe what he saw. He could distinguish the shade and the size of the cars, and the direction in which they were travelling.

"In the very beginning, the doctors didn't guarantee me anything," Harold said. "But the first time they gave me the implant I knew they were on the right track."

The success of the sixteen-electrode grid makes de Juan and Humayun confident that soon a device with sixty to a hundred electrodes can be implanted. "Sixty to a hundred isn't reading and driving, but it provides pretty clear motion and size," de Juan said. "A dot-matrix printer is a five-by-seven array, and can easily make any letter of the alphabet. At sixty to a hundred, you're able to see big letters." This device is being tested in animals but hasn't yet been tested in people. De Juan and Humayun's ultimate goal is a thousand and twenty-four electrodes, a thirty-two-by-thirty-two grid. "This will allow you to read and recognize faces," de Juan said. "We currently can make a grid like that; we can even make a grid of a million electrodes. That's not the problem. The problem is matching the electronics to the patients' own circuits."

I went to Humayun's laboratory and tested a simulator that projected a thirty-two-by-thirty-two grid, to get a sense of the clarity of vision that might be possible with a more advanced—and still unavailable—implant. The device looked like the wraparound metal viewfinder worn by Geordi, a blind character in "Star Trek: The Next Generation." I put it over my eyes and moved my head around the lab, looking at the scientists next to me and then at a stack of papers on the desk. My field of vision was divided into small boxes, like the pixelated images on a computer screen. I could distinguish faces only in gross terms. I located a Federal Express envelope on the desk, and I could easily read the logo—the capital "F" and "E" are 2.6 inches tall, and the lower-case "e," "d," and "x" are 1.8 inches—but smaller print was a blur.

Unlike Connie, I experienced no lag time between scanning the FedEx envelope with the simulator's camera and becoming aware of the image. That's because my neural code is intact. When light from the camera passed through the lenses of my eyes and activated my rods and cones, it was compressed onto the neurons of my optic nerves and digital signals were seamlessly sent to my brain. The software that substitutes for the rods and cones has to somehow reduce the input from the normal hundred and thirty million rods and cones to—in the best-case scenario—a thousand and twenty-four electrodes.

"That the brain can make sense out of just a thousand electrodes—thirty-two times thirty-two, or a thousand and twenty-four, points of light—is staggering," Humayun said to me. "And that's the

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They're the best of friends, but they couldn't be more different. Susan lives uptown; Caryn lives downtown. Susan's married with kids; Caryn leads the single life. When Susan's calling it a night, Caryn's is just beginning. The one thing they have in common? Shopping at Saks Fifth Avenue. The destination for style, service, choice and fun. This fall, express your unique style at an exclusive shopping event October 9 to 11 in every Saks store. It's your chance to win fabulous prizes to make all your own.

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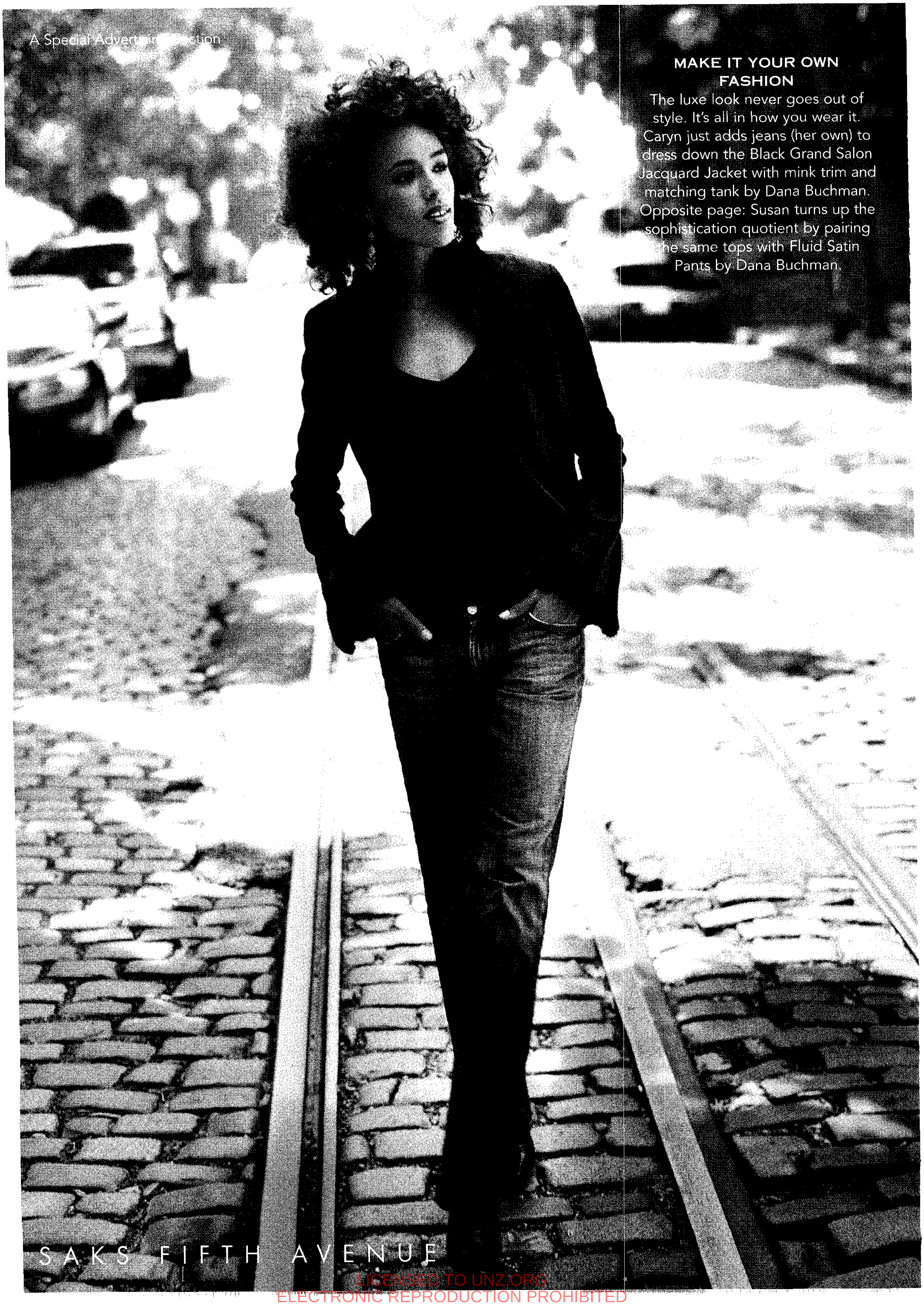

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The luxe look never goes out of style. It's all in how you wear it. Caryn just adds jeans (her own) to dress down the Black Grand Salon Jacquard Jacket with mink trim and matching tank by Dana Buchman. Opposite page: Susan turns up the sophistication quotient by pairing the same tops with Fluid Satin Pants by Dana Buchman.

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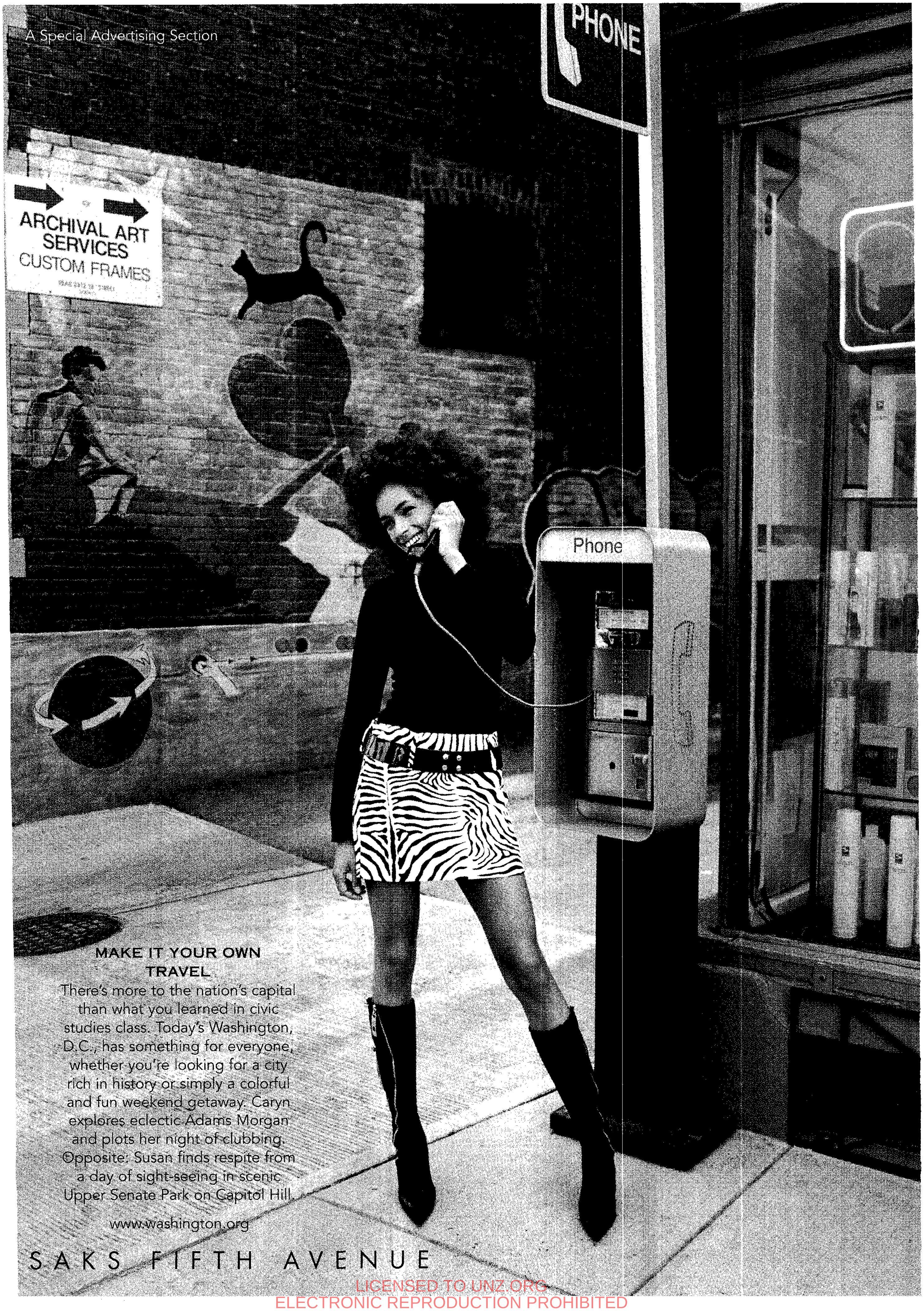
5
DANA BUCHMAN



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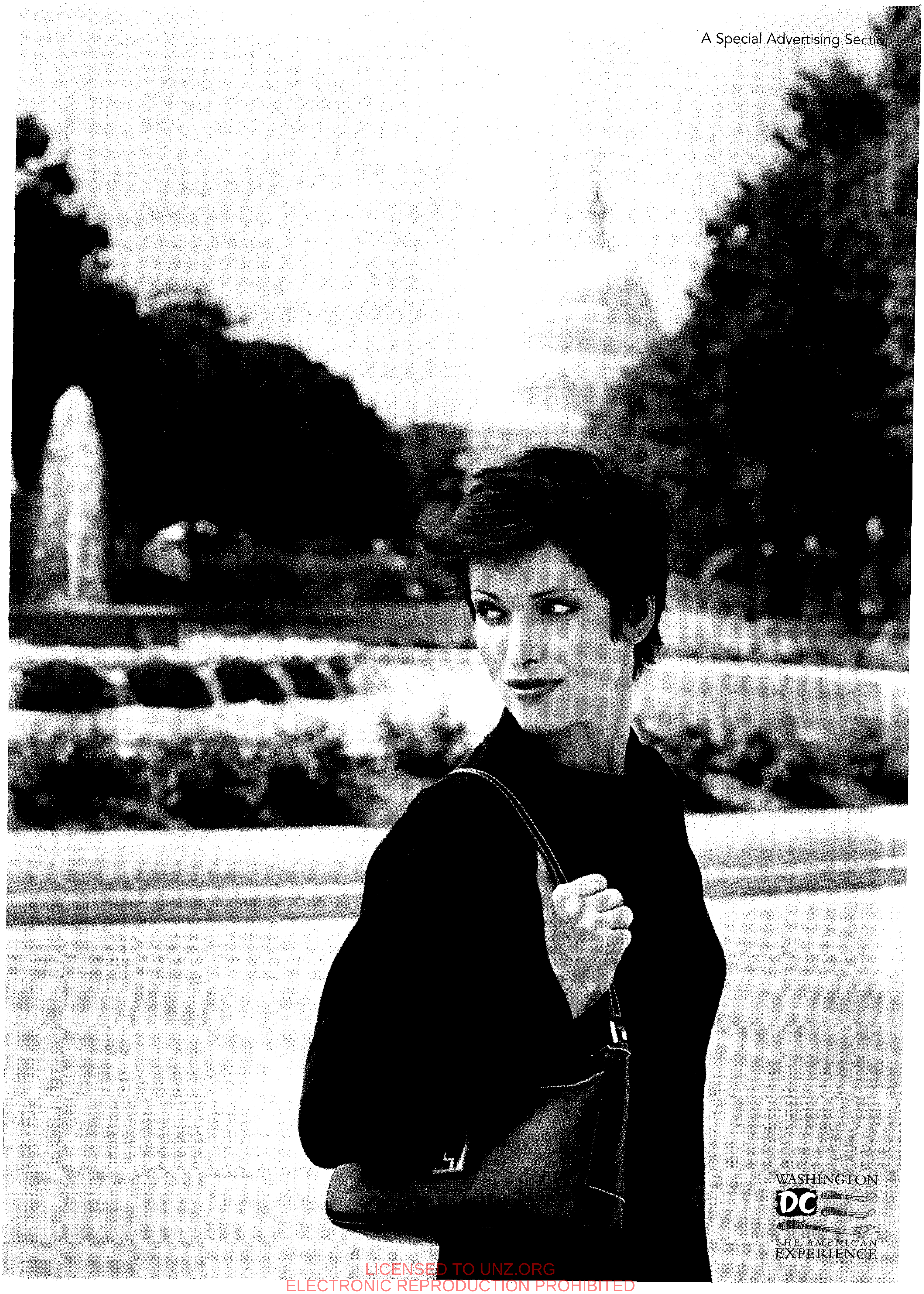
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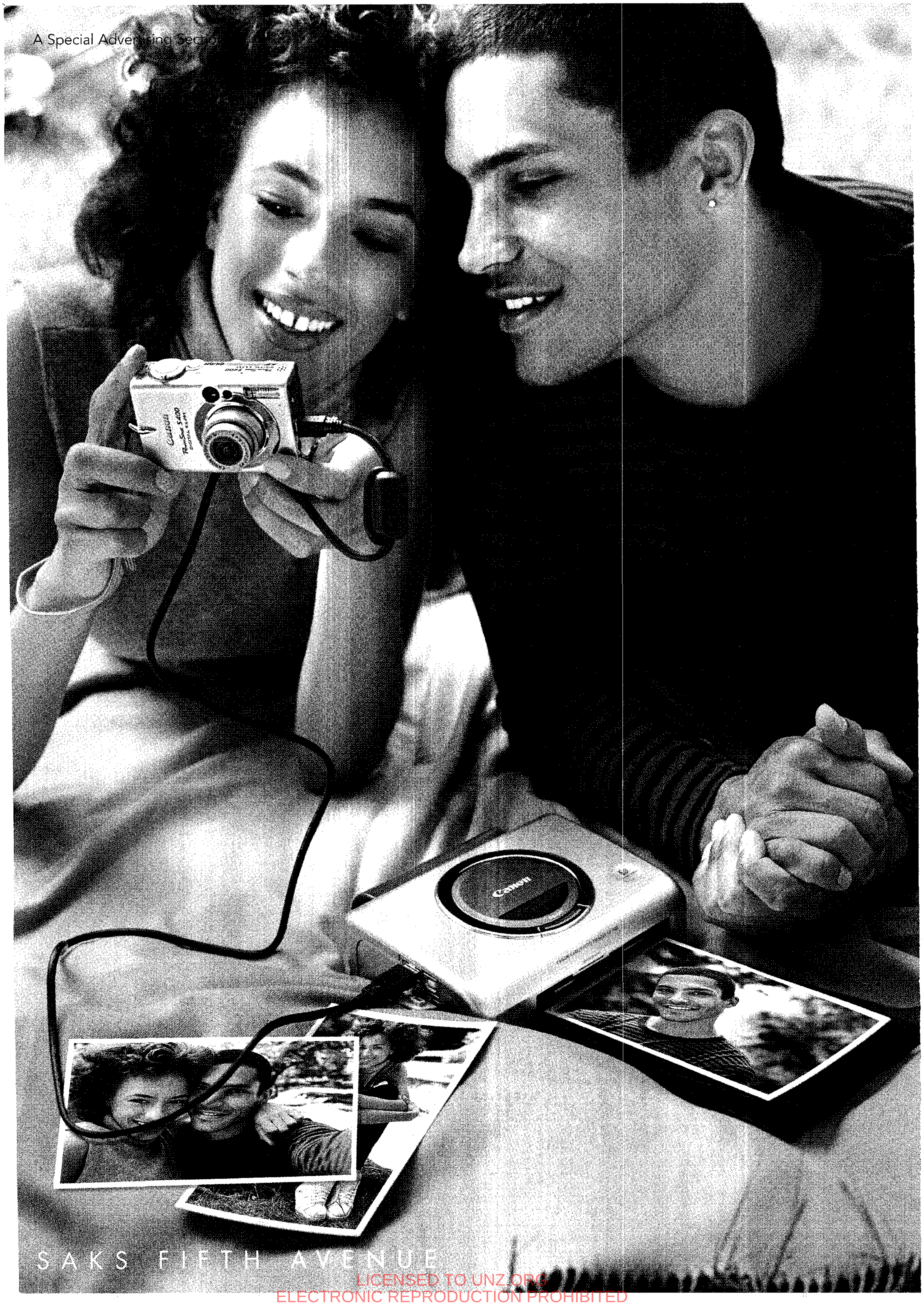
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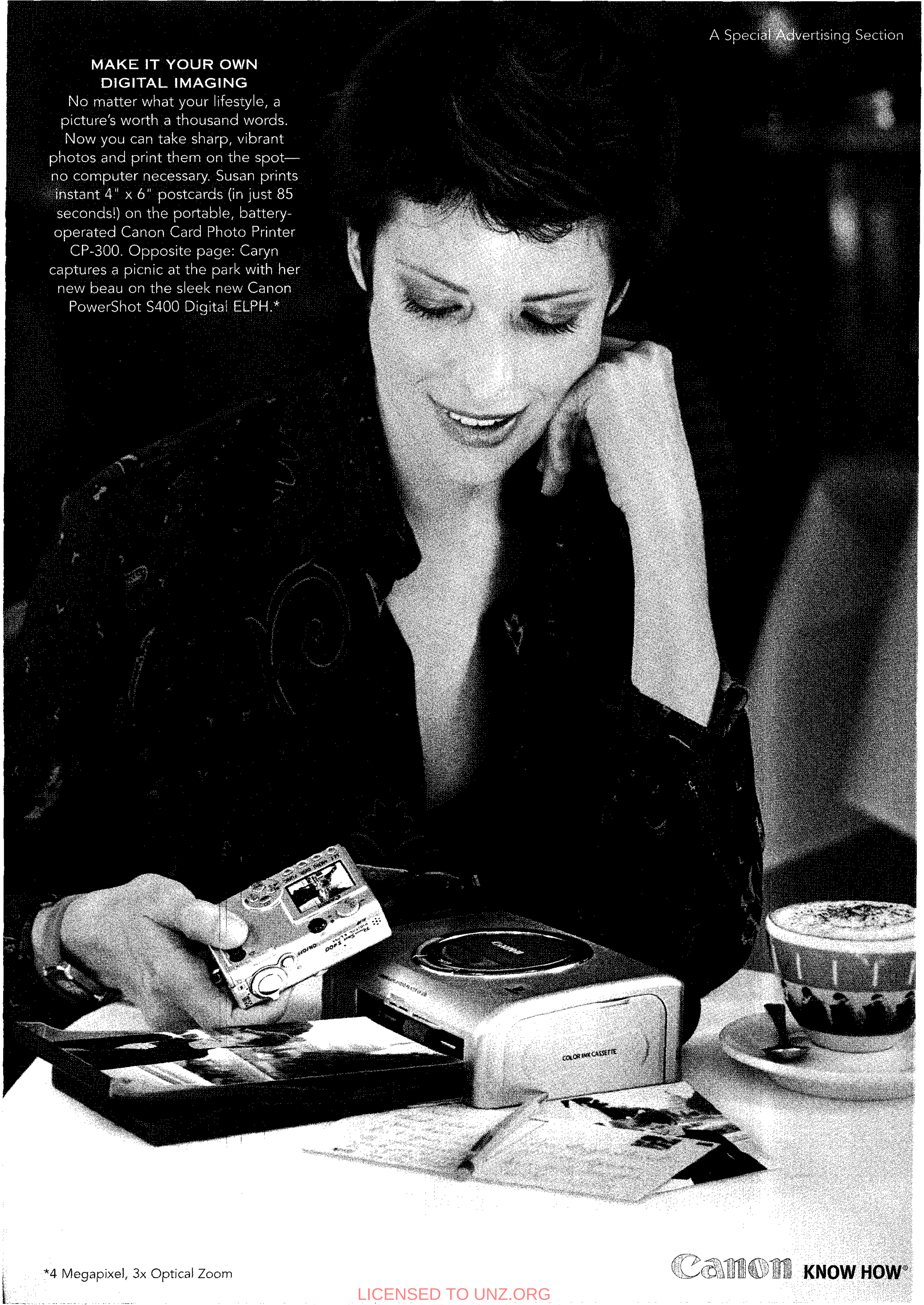

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*4 Megapixel, 3x Optical Zoom

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When you get home at night, how do you unleash yourself? Caryn's got absolutely no reservations. Here, she takes to the table, putting the party into "party of two." Opposite: Susan puts the kids to bed and turns her attention to her own inner child. She sets the mood with a few friends and a little Kahlua.

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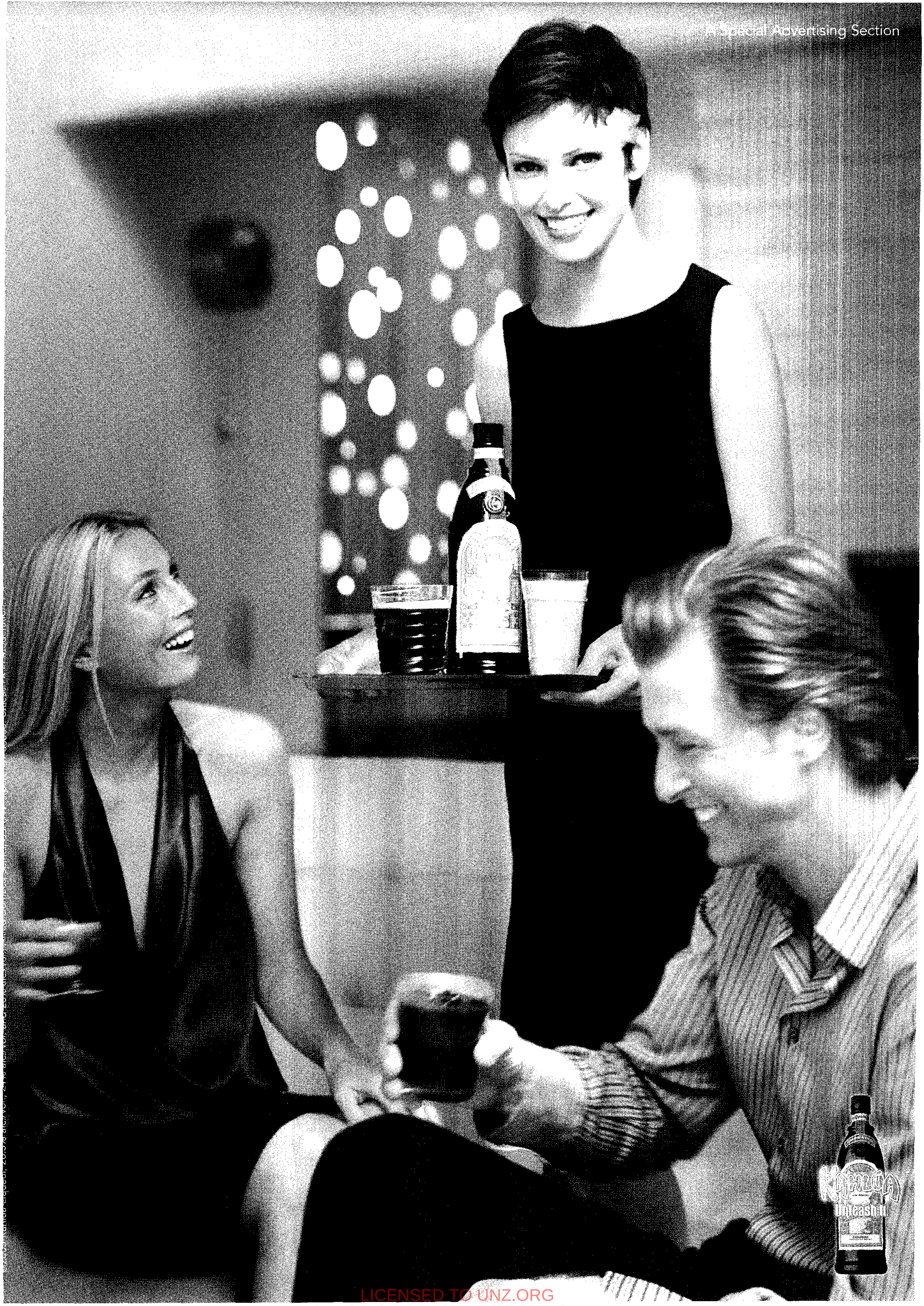
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## WHY A CORNER IN THE APARTMENT PUTS ME TO SLEEP

This corner makes me drowsy
like a bad unguent. Your absence is
a need to close my eyes. The cracked Tiffany lamp
a shaded rose you bought at a Brooklyn thrift shop—
now a throbbed Persephone
gone underground.

You are no epitaph but that scarred piano
we used to play. Great music trivializes, when
so much worse hurts, can't keep my
eyelids open. The hypnotizing rugs that
stare into Alone. My thoughts sway into violent,
black somnambulant, cold death

supplying the madness of your gone.
Don't let me dream, doze and deny, like
a TV slob. Avenues across the room, so dear,
the places where you were, the very
chairs excluding welcome.
And the multitudes

that held us, all withdrawn.
Hey, quick! I've got to stand up,
fighting off sleep, not the better for
waking.

—*Jane Mayhall*

part that people don't understand. They ask: How in the world can someone build an eye? How can this actually happen? But they don't realize that we can connect a grid to the world's most powerful computer, the brain." The brain, it appears, is capable of correcting the imperfections inherent in the device and its software.

Dr. Alan Chow, a pediatric ophthalmologist, and his brother Vincent, an electrical engineer, believe that it is possible to restore some sight by using the existing neural code rather than simulating it with a computer. Their company, Optobionics, which is based in Illinois, is developing a wireless chip with photoelectric cells that, they argue, can convert the light that passes through the eye into electrical pulses in the retina. Their current chip, which is affixed to the retina, is about two millimetres in diameter and less than the thickness of human hair, or about a thousandth of an inch. The surface of the chip is covered with some five thousand microscopic solar cells, known as microphotodiodes. "When we initially went to the manufacturers"—in the late eighties—"they asked, 'Where are the wires?' and we said, 'There are no wires,' " Chow told me. He said that he wanted a simple device that "would not be cumbersome for the patients." Chow also likens the eye to a computer. "In R.P., you can think of the photoreceptors as the keyboard, with all the other components of the computer still intact," he said. "With our device, we are trying to replace only the keys. Other devices that use electronics from the outside are more complicated, as if you were getting into the computer's C.P.U., its microprocessor. No one really understands how to replicate the digital signal from the retina to the optic nerve yet, so we prefer to rely on the cells that are still functioning."

The first Optobionics implant was performed in June, 2000, and ten people with R.P. have now undergone the procedure. These patients suffered from visual disabilities ranging from four times the legal definition of blindness (about 20/800) to no light perception whatsoever. In May, 2003, Chow presented his recent findings at a meeting of researchers in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

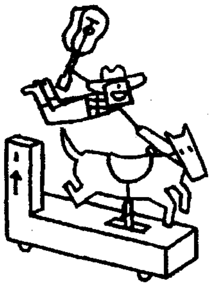
Paul Ladis is a forty-six-year-old retired machinist who has R.P. He had the chip implanted in early November, 2002. In kindergarten, he had difficulty seeing the blackboard and, as an older child, had reduced night vision, but his vision didn't become significantly impaired until he reached his twenties. As a machinist, he worked on sheeting and aluminum, with heavy tools, for fifteen years, but it has now been a decade since he practiced his trade. Paul has a ready laugh and a strong Chicago accent. "I am an extremely cautious guy," he said with a chuckle. "Everyone I worked with at the machine shop got hurt—deep cuts and lost fingers. I was the only one, even with my poor vision, who was never injured." Paul's level of sight before receiving the chip was minimal. "I could barely see a light bulb in front of my face," he said. Two of his three brothers also have R.P., and last year on a July 4th picnic the brother whose vision was intact told Paul that he had seen a television program on Chow's work. The next day, Paul's wife went to the Optobionics Web site, and, after careful consideration, Paul decided to apply for participation in the trials. He went through forty hours of preoperative testing before undergoing the surgery on his right eye, which was performed at Rush-Presbyterian–St. Luke's Medical Center, in Chicago.

One night, about two weeks after the operation, Paul was having a snack in the kitchen when he noticed something bright at the edge of his vision. "I looked around, and saw this light, and realized that I had left the refrigerator door open," he said. "If I hadn't seen it, I would have walked right into the open door, like I've done a thousand times before. For me, that was quite an achievement. It was fabulous." Now, he said, "I'm able to see contrast a lot more. I can see different shades of dark and light."

But Paul's apparent improvement in visual perception isn't the same from one day to the next. He estimates that for three to four days of the week his retina is "on." The other days, his sight is only slightly better than it was before the chip was implanted. Paul said that blind people don't really see black, as is often assumed. "When I was fifteen or sixteen, I would look at the night sky and realize that it wasn't black anymore but a fuzzy gray," he told me. "Now, on the good days, when my vision seems better, I can see black again." And now, if one of his daughters is wearing a striped shirt and his retina is "on," he can detect her movement as she goes by him.

In the initial stages of R.P., the ability to see fluctuates, and Chow believes that the chip has returned Paul to an earlier phase of the disease: "It's almost like we're turning the clock backward." In all the patients who have the chip, Chow said, there has been moderate to substantial improvement in a variety of visual functions. However, four patients who have had the prosthesis for more than two years have reported regressing from their peak visual performance with the chip.

There is considerable skepticism about whether the Optobionics implant alone can generate enough current to stimulate the optic nerve and produce any vision at all. Eberhart Zrenner, an eminent German scientist who is leading a competing research team, wrote in *Science* in February, 2002, that Chow's model doesn't have the necessary power to activate nerve cells. John Wyatt, the M.I.T. professor, agrees. "The physics won't give you that," he said. "You cannot get more energy out of a photodiode than you put in, because there is no battery in there, no amplifier." Even if a person stared directly at the sun, he said, he doubted that the implant could generate enough electrical current to trigger neurons. Chow's patients could be experiencing a placebo effect, or, he said, "there may be biological restoration of some kind that's occurring." The small amounts of electricity, too low to stimulate the optic nerve, could cause the remaining cells in the retina to release chemicals that boost their function. "But it's not enough to make the nerve cells in the retina fire," Wyatt said. "I'll be happy to stake my whole career on that."



Chow says that he is used to dealing with skeptics. He asserts that the implant does produce the electricity required to stimulate retinal neurons. But he also acknowledges that the chip's greatest benefit may be its ability to "wake up" dormant rods and cones throughout the eye. "About half the patients see light directly over the implant," he said. "But the most significant improvement occurs in the areas surrounding it."

He argues that testing for a placebo effect by implanting an inert chip would be unethical, since it would subject the patient to extensive surgery, as well as to the risks of having a foreign body in the eye, when there is no expected benefit. In studies performed on rats, which he presented at a recent conference, Chow used inactive chips as controls, and, while there was some effect in terms of preserving electrical activity in the animals' retinas, he states that the degree of signalling was much less than had been observed with the activated photodiodes. He hopes that in the coming months his work will be independently tested at the Atlanta Veterans Administration Medical Center, which is affiliated with Emory University, and at Rush-Presbyterian–St. Luke's Medical Center.

For de Juan and Humayun, the problem remains how to generate high-resolution images in the brain from grids of only a thousand electrodes. "The neurons are there, and they are functional," Humayun told me. "Currents can be generated that aren't so high that they burn the neurons when we get to a grid of a thousand. But do we know enough about the neural code? All the neurons are synched in your eye, tied together in a neural network. Spatial processing is well understood. The retina is like a keyboard: if you stimulate here, the light is seen over there. But what about temporal sequencing? What kind of patterns of pulses do we need to send down the optic nerve?"

As Connie Schoeman's testing demonstrated, the patient's input is essential. When she experienced a delay between the time it took the camera to pick up the image of the plastic-foam cup and the time it took her brain to form an image of the cup, the researchers realized that they would need to rewrite the software. "You can imagine how it would be if we tested only animals," Humayun said. "We'd never get the feedback that we do from patients, who can tell us that we're off. This is how we're going to break the neural code and learn how to design software that allows an electronic device to talk to the brain through the optic nerves."

Wyatt thinks that although scientists will never be able to reproduce this vastly complex code, in the end it may not matter. "The neural code is the eight-hundred-pound gorilla in the living room," he said. "But the brain is the angel in the living room. When the brain receives the artificial electronic pulses from the device, it may learn how to adapt to make something coherent." In effect, because the brain is malleable, particularly in people who have had long-standing sensory deprivation, it may "rewrite" the natural neural code to conform to the device's input.

"The important thing is not, bang, you turn on the camera and somebody who has been blind for fifty years can see. That's just not reality," Humayun said. Retraining the brain is what's required. And not only retraining the brain but also retraining the brain to perceive at a lower resolution, since the input is not as detailed as what comes from a normal retina. Cochlear implants require a learning curve—about two months of intensive training—similar to that of the retinal prosthesis. And, Rizzo says, any device needs to be an improvement over the seeing-eye dogs and canes that blind people now rely on to navigate.

Three months after sitting with Connie Schoeman, I spoke with her about how much progress she had made, and confirmed her report with data from Humayun. She told me that she was now able to correctly identify objects. "These strings of Christmas lights allow me to distinguish one object, like a knife, from another, like a plate," she said.

When I asked her what this meant for a blind person, she said, "It's the beginning, and it's really, really exciting. I'm waiting for permission to have the device at home. Then I'll see how much use I can get out of it."

It is unclear to what extent the sixteen-electrode grid will benefit Connie. The model with a thousand and twenty-four electrodes would probably be more functional, allowing her to see faces and letters with greater resolution. Humayun insists that it's only a matter of time before the necessary advancements are made. "It's an engineering problem," he said. "It's not like cold fusion or time travel." ♦

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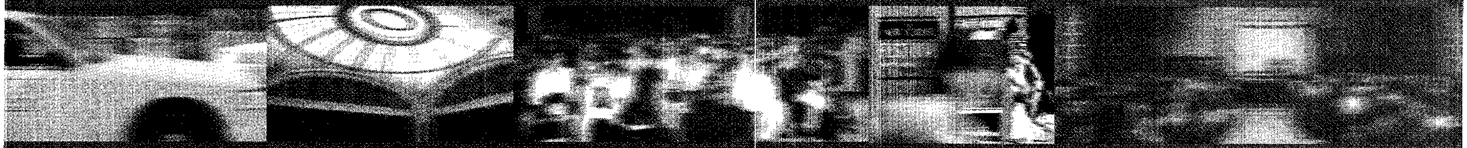

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*The triumphs, travels, and movable feasts of R. W. Apple, Jr.*

### BY CALVIN TRILLIN

There is a consensus in the trade, I am pleased to report, that Johnny Apple—R. W. Apple, Jr., of the New York *Times*—is a lot easier to take now than he once was. Even Apple believes that. When I asked him not long ago about the paragraph in Gay Talese's 1969 book on the *Times*, "The Kingdom and the Power," which presents him as a brash young eager beaver, he said it was, alas, "quite an accurate portrait," although he doesn't recall boasting in the newsroom that while covering the war in Vietnam he had personally killed a few Vietcong—the remark that, in Talese's account, led an older reporter to say, "Women and children, I presume." In speaking of those early days, Apple said, "I was desperate to prove myself." You could argue, I suppose, that, in the words of a longtime colleague, "he doesn't have to argue the case anymore." In a forty-year career with the newspaper, he has been a political reporter whose stories at times seemed to set the agenda for a Presidential campaign; a war reporter who led the *Times* coverage in Vietnam for two years in the late sixties, and its coverage of the Gulf War a quarter of a century later; a foreign correspondent who has been in a hundred and nine countries (yes, he keeps a tally); the newspaper's premier writer of analytical pieces from Washington; and, these days, a wide-ranging writer on culture and travel and, especially, food. Of course, it's always possible that Apple's accomplishments are not, in fact, the principal source of his mellowing. There are any number of other theories about what might account for descriptions of the mature Apple that actually employ the word "endearing"—theories that include the possibility that we've simply grown used to him. "It's like having a big old Labrador dog," Jim Wooten, of ABC, said recently of Apple. "He knocks over the lamp with his tail. He slobbers on everything. But you still love him."

It is certainly true that Apple, at sixty-eight, could hardly be described as having shyly withdrawn from the spotlight. In a trade whose flamboyant characters are increasingly in short supply, he is still so widely discussed among reporters that Apple stories constitute a subgenre of the journalistic anecdote. Apple stories often portray R. W. Apple, Jr., checking into a hotel so staggeringly expensive that no other reporter would dare mention it on his expense account, or confidently knocking out a complicated lead story at a political convention as the deadline or the dinner hour approaches, or telling a sommelier that the wine won't do (even if the sommelier has brought out the most distinguished bottle in that part of Alabama), or pontificating on architecture or history or opera or soccer or horticulture. He still travels grandly and eats prodigiously. In Apple stories that take place in restaurants or hotels or even newsrooms, the verb used to describe his manner of entry is normally "swept in." Although people often find him charming, he is still capable of reducing a news clerk or a waiter or a campaign travel coördinator to tears now and then—like an ogre past his scariest days who just wants to keep his hand in. All in all, I can imagine that people who meet R. W. Apple, Jr., for the first time in his maturity might assume that some time-travel production of "The Man Who Came to Dinner" had managed to land Sir John Falstaff for the role of Sheridan Whiteside.

Physically, Apple is more noticeable than ever. He has a round face and a pug nose that give him a rather youthful appearance; a former colleague once said that when Apple flashes his characteristic look of triumph he resembles "a very big four-year-old." His form reflects the eating habits of someone who has been called Three Lunches Apple, a nickname he likes. Andrew Rosenthal, now the deputy editorial-page editor of the *Times*, once said that Johnny Apple had the best mind and the worst body in American journalism. Apple famously sees to his early-morning tasks—sending off a flurry of e-mails, perusing his investments, absorbing the newspapers—while encased in one of the brightly striped nightshirts made for him by Harvie & Hudson, of Jermyn Street, the same firm that makes his dress shirts, so that a house guest not yet fully recovered from a late night at the Apple table can be startled by the impression that a particularly festive party tent has somehow found its way indoors.

Apple's method of locomotion—which he accomplishes in short, almost dainty steps—has some resemblance to a man carefully steering a large stomach down a narrow path that is being cleared at that very moment by native bearers; it is easily mistaken for a swagger. He speaks with as much authority as he ever did, whether the conversation is on the foreign policy of John Foster Dulles or on which three zinfandels are the zinfandels worth drinking. To characterize the great man's speaking style, collectors of Apple stories often use the phrase "holding forth," although he is also, truth be told, someone who takes in just about everything everyone else in the conversation says and files it away in what Morley Safer, of CBS, who has been a friend of Apple's since they were in Vietnam together, calls "that Palm Pilot of a brain he has." On the whole, what Apple says while holding forth is considered by his friends worth listening to. The way Ben Bradlee, the former editor of the Washington *Post*, puts it is "I'd like to hear Apple on almost any subject, reserving the right to tell him he's full of shit."

Although sometimes years have passed between our meetings, I have kept vague tabs on R. W. Apple, Jr., for long enough to consider my observation of him a sketchy version of what social scientists would call a longitudinal study. I

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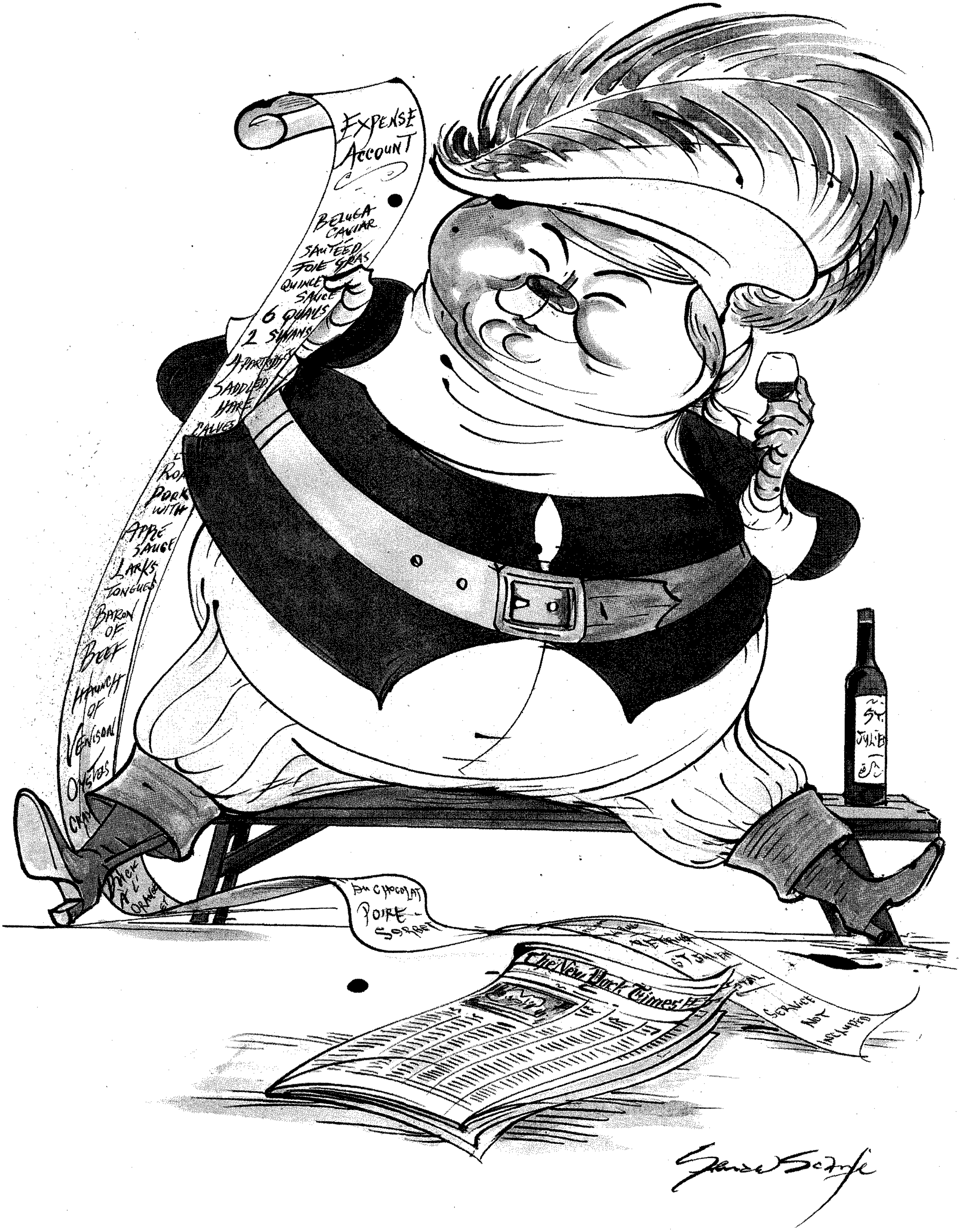
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*Apple is a Falstaffian figure at the Times, where he has covered campaigns, wars, foreign countries—and now has a new beat.*

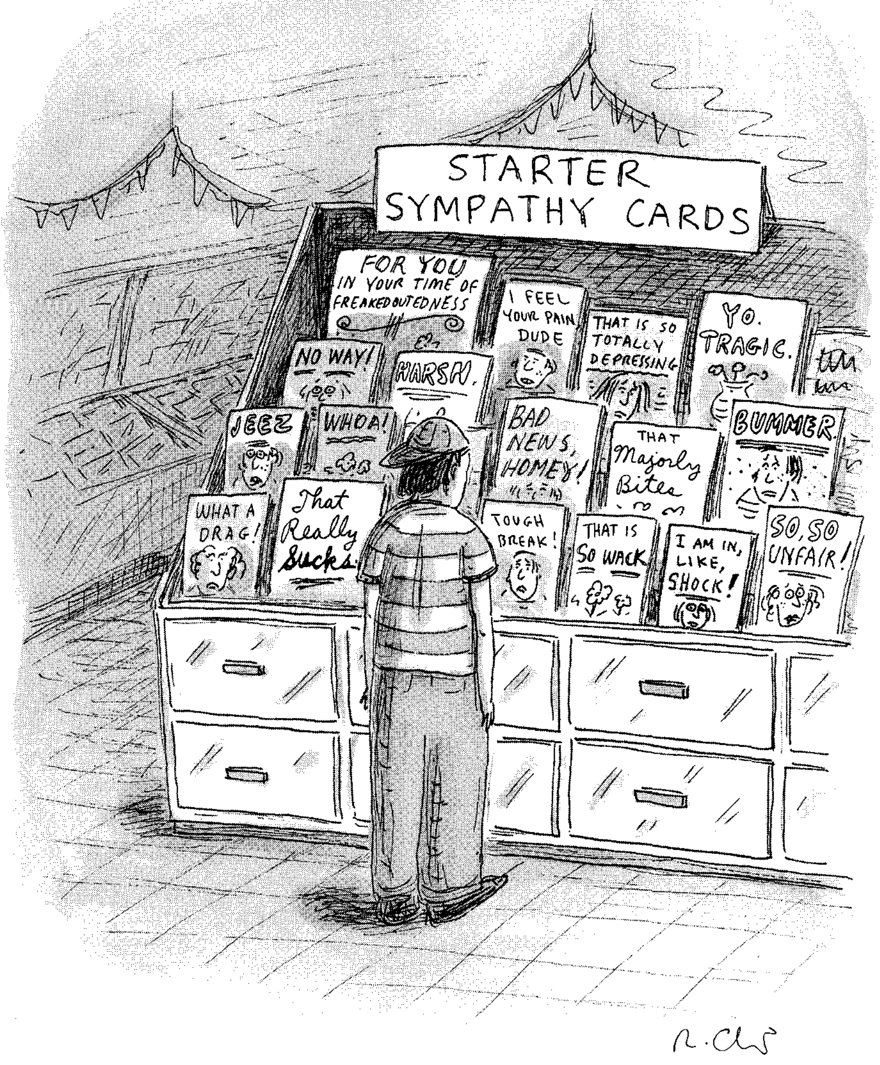
first encountered him in the spring of 1956, my junior year in college. I was then the chairman of the Yale *Daily News*, and Apple walked into my office to introduce himself as the chairman of the *Daily Princetonian*. It turned out to be a position he didn't hold long. A couple of months after he began to spend every waking hour at the *Prince*, he was booted out of Princeton, for the second time. By his standards, I have occasionally acknowledged to him, I failed to throw myself wholeheartedly into the job of running a college newspaper: I graduated.

Looking back, I realize that Apple differed from most of our contemporaries from places like Princeton and Yale who ended up in the trade, in that he'd always known that he wanted to be a newspaper reporter. In the mid-fifties, a trickle of undergraduate journalists moved resolutely from the Harvard *Crimson* toward the New York *Times*, but most people I knew who became reporters in those pre-Watergate days sort of backed in. They couldn't face law school, or the novel just didn't pan out, or they happened to be working for a magazine around the time they realized they were incapable of making a career decision.

Apple had known since he was thirteen, growing up in Akron, Ohio, not simply that he wanted to be a reporter but that he wanted to be a reporter for the New York *Times*. Having found the Akron *Beacon Journal's* coverage of the 1948 Olympics insufficiently detailed, he'd gone to the library to look up results in the *Times*, and decided on the spot that being paid for going to places that weren't Akron and writing about them was precisely the life he'd had in mind. Coincidentally, his skills could well have been designed for the *Times*. Some of his contemporaries who stood out at the paper—Talese, for instance, and David Halberstam and the late J. Anthony Lukas—found newspaper work confining, and left fairly early on to write books. For Apple, newspapering was in no way transitional; the *Times* news story seemed to be his natural form. "At an early age, he had a strong idea of what he wanted to be—an outsized romantic idea—and he was able to fulfill it," Tom Brokaw told me. "It isn't just that he found the right trenchcoat."

Perhaps because his dream actually came true, Apple had at the start—and still has—an enthusiasm for journalism and for the *Times* that is rare among reporters, most of whom like to grouse about their calling and look upon the organization they work for through narrowed eyes, the way they might look upon a press release from the State Department. It's not that he is shy about expressing his opinion of a *Times* editor who has done damage to his copy. But, in the words of the novelist Ward Just, a Vietnam pal who finds his friend's institutional loyalty admirable if somewhat puzzling, "He really is a *Times* man. He believes in the *Times*. You can't separate the two."

Apple's cultural interests also set him apart from most of his contemporaries in the trade. If he's in a European city for a political story or a Midwestern city searching for superior bratwurst, he is unlikely to leave before visiting a museum or inspecting a notable new building—a custom not followed, I'm in a position to say, by most reporters of his era. He is a student of history. Recalling Apple's writings in the *Times*, friends often mention, say, a piece on the Eugene McCarthy campaign which began with a quote from "Henry V" or a piece on Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall which tossed in an evaluation of Haydn's place in Middle European music. When Apple was Washington bureau chief and thus required to attend by audio hookup the noon and four-thirty meetings held every day by the top editors in New York, he was known to pass the less scintillating moments of the discussion leafing through auction catalogues relevant to the collection of Arts and Crafts vases he has in his weekend house in Pennsylvania. Apple has a wide range of accomplished friends out-



side the worlds of journalism and politics, and he is up to carrying on, say, a serious discussion of architecture with James Stewart Polshek or a serious discussion of music with William Bolcom. "Johnny is such a flamboyant personality that people sometimes don't get the fact that underneath the occasional oratorical overkill there's a deep, fundamental knowledge," I was told by Howell Raines, who, when he was Washington bureau chief and again when he was executive editor, would have been Apple's boss if Apple went in for that sort of thing.

Apple once told me that his interest in music began in the Lutheran Church, where he heard Bach every Sunday, and some of his interest in art and architecture began while he was at Princeton. ("I didn't do very well by Princeton's lights, but I did very well by my lights.") The writer Jane Kramer, who lived in the same Upper West Side apartment building as Apple in the early sixties, when she was a graduate student and he was working at NBC on the Huntley-Brinkley program, says that he was the only one of her friends in those days whose idea of a good time was dinner at Le Pavillon and whose hobbies included collecting Old Master drawings. A range of interests that includes fine wine and elegant buildings may fit more gracefully on a portly fellow of Apple's years than it did on a hustling cub reporter. Speaking of Apple's air of being a cultivated man of the world, Joseph Lelyveld, a contemporary of Apple's who became the executive editor of the *Times*, has said, "I used to say that Johnny grew into the person he was pretending to be when we were young. Now I wonder whether he actually *was* that person then and the rest of us didn't know enough to realize it."

During Apple's early days on the paper, he was resented by his colleagues for getting plum assignments without going through the seven levels of purgatory then expected of new boys at the *Times*. To some people in the newsroom, his enthusiasm seemed indistinguishable from buttering up superiors. It didn't help that Apple's contemporaries on the paper were under the impression that he was making more money than they were. "Apple bragged he was being paid fifty dollars more than he actually was, which would have made him the highest-salaried reporter in the city room, except for Homer Bigart," Arthur Gelb, then the deputy metropolitan editor, writes in his forthcoming memoir, "City Room." (As Apple remembers it, he did get paid more than the others, the *Times* having matched his salary when he came over from NBC, and word spread through an overheard telephone conversation.) It probably also didn't help that Apple seemed not to notice the effect that all of this was having on his colleagues. "A cape buffalo is what a cape buffalo is," Jim Wooten told me, at which point I limited him to two animal images in discussing Apple. "It rambles through the brush. It eats what it wants to eat. It does whatever it wants to do, without knowing how much other animals resent it."

Early on, Apple was jumped over more senior reporters to become the *Times* bureau chief in Albany. "John had developed skills that none of us yet had," I was told by Sydney Schanberg, who was in the bureau, but "he needed training in socialization issues." One of the other reporters in the bureau was Doug Robinson, who became the city editor of the Philadelphia *Inquirer*. Robinson, now retired, would not be thought of as someone who always took a completely respectful view of people he worked for, having got into the habit at one point in his *Times* career of calling the executive editor a "borderline psychotic" and describing the managing editor, the second-in-command, as "a man who couldn't find kitty litter in a cat box." In Albany, Robinson recalls, Johnny Apple was resented partly for an air of superiority that was galling to the other reporters, "particularly when they realized, upon sober reflection, that he *was* superior. That was the part that was the hardest to take—that he was so damn good."

Robinson was the protagonist of what I'm tempted to call the authorized version of the most often told Apple story: Statehouse reporters who hung out at a local bar, having decided that their conversation was overly dominated by complaints about Johnny Apple, agreed that anyone who mentioned Apple's name would have to put a quarter in a drink fund—an agreement that made cocktail hour more soothing until, as Robinson recalled recently, "I came in, and I said, 'That son of a bitch! He's done it again!' And I pulled out a whole fistful of quarters, laid them on the table, and excoriated Apple for fifteen minutes."

Apple stories often come in multiple versions, and a lot of tales that may not be true have attached themselves to him, in the way that a lot of quotes have attached themselves to, say, Dorothy Parker or Yogi Berra. Correcting some of them recently, Apple said that it's not true that he conspired on his first honeymoon to book a cabin on a ship to Naples next to the cabin of the then publisher, Arthur (Punch) Sulzberger (Apple insists that the booking was coincidental). He says he never owned part of a British football team and never chartered a plane to catch up with a political campaign after oversleeping, although he has chartered some planes in his time. It is not true that he once put in for a fur coat on an expense account from Iceland, or maybe Greenland, and, having had that item rejected, filed expenses for the same total again without mentioning the coat and attached a note saying, "Find it." (That's an old chestnut told about any number of foreign correspondents; Apple's coat was down, was bought in Finland, and was paid for by the *Times*.) It is not true that in the most recent political convention in Los Angeles he stayed in a suite at the Bel-Air while just about everyone else from the *Times* was at a charmless commercial hotel; he says that the room he stayed in at the Bel-Air, being decently commodious, may simply have given the impression of being a suite.

Apple now tells Apple stories on himself. In a speech at the Century Club not long ago, he said that when he arrived at Princeton he decided it might be advantageous to claim a home town with a bit more cachet than Akron ("just till I got my feet on the ground"), and chose one he'd seen mentioned in the golf results as the home of the Winged Foot Golf Club. Unfortunately, he had never heard the name of the place pronounced, and was thus able to set off great hilarity among a group of Eastern-boarding-school graduates—the sort that some Midwestern high-school boys at Princeton then referred to as Tweedy Shitballs—by saying that he was from "Mamma-RONN-nick."

He knows Apple stories about his girth and Apple stories about his tendency to hold forth—a state that Tom Brokaw has referred to as being "in full Apple." He loves the story about a dinner-table conversation early in his experience as a stepfather. His first marriage had broken up in the seventies, in Washington, when he fell in love with Betsey Brown, a charming woman who speaks in the sort of plummy accent heard among Richmond débutantes discussing cocktail napkins but happens to be a Bryn Mawr graduate who reads more newspapers than Apple does. She was also married, and she had two children. ("Within a limited social circle in Washington," Apple now says, "I think it would be fair to say that it was a brief but fairly vivid scandal.") A trip to Europe had not completely melted the hearts of the children, John and Catherine Brown, who were unaccustomed to being herded through quite that many cathedrals that intently by someone with that much information at his fingertips and that many reference books in his satchel. Then, at dinner one evening, an American Indian design on Betsey's dress inspired the assigning of Indian names, until everyone had one but R. W. Apple, Jr. "That's easy," John Brown, who was then about nine, finally said. "You're Sitting Bullshit." As Catherine tells the story, there was a moment of shocked silence, and then "Johnny gave one of his full-body laughs." After that, the children felt free to name Apple's stomach—Eugene, and, eventually, Eugene Maximus.

In support of the notion that Apple is something like a lovable old Labrador, it should be said that many Apple stories portray him as enormously generous—generous with his hospitality and generous with the telephone numbers of his sources and generous with his good offices at the *Times* for someone he thinks should work there and generous with his restaurant recommendations ("The only place in Scotland to have Scottish beef is in Linlithgow, and here's the name of the owner . . ."). The political-campaign reporters who rode one bus or another with him—people like Richard Cohen, of the Washington *Post,* and Curtis Wilkie, of the Boston *Globe,* and Jack Germond and Jules Witcover, of the Baltimore *Sun*—liked to play jokes on him and liked to complain about him, but, as Germond said recently, "Most of us had an affection for John, even when he was at his most bumptious."

A *Times* contemporary of Apple's has pointed out that the Apple stories that "make you shudder" tend to date back to the sixties. A number of them were collected in "The Boys on the Bus," Timothy Crouse's book on the reporters covering the 1972 Presidential campaign—a book that served for years as the standard text on R. W. Apple, Jr. "Read one way, the book is immensely flattering to me," Apple told me. "Read another way, it basically says I'm an asshole." The book angered Apple—although one Apple-mellowing theory holds that it did him the favor of providing the cape buffalo a glimpse of how some of the other animals might view him.

What was flattering to Apple in "The Boys on the Bus" was, by and large, its discussion of his competence as a reporter. A McGovern worker was quoted describing his first glimpse of how the national press operates: "Johnny Apple of the New York *Times* sat in a corner and everyone peered over his shoulder to find out what he was writing." Apple's competitors give him mixed reviews on the 1972 campaign—some of them believe he became too attached to the string of endorsements that Edmund Muskie was accumulating—but virtually all of them say, without being asked, that his campaign coverage four years later was worthy of a Pulitzer, a prize he has never won. David Broder, of the Washington *Post,* told me that in 1976 Apple "damn near invented the Iowa caucuses" as a serious element of the Presidential campaign—it was Apple who first spotted the potential strength of Jimmy Carter—and after that, as Curtis Wilkie has put it, "he ran rings around everyone."

What Crouse referred to as Apple's "braggadocio, his grandstanding, his mammoth ego" dominated the portrait in "The Boys on the Bus." An account of Apple's first meeting with David Halberstam is fairly typical of Crouse's Apple stories. It describes Apple sauntering over to Halberstam's desk to inform him, at some length, that at a party the previous evening—a party that included some Sulzberger cousins and a *Times* vice-president—Halberstam's name had been mentioned quite favorably. Finally, Crouse wrote, "Halberstam said his first words to Johnny Apple: 'Fuck off, kid!'"

Looking back, Halberstam says of

## LOW RELIEF

They hunted lions, they hunted humans and enslaved them.
One lion, I recall, had been viciously speared; he vomited blood,
his hindquarters dragged behind him like cement in a sack.

*Spirits with wings and the heads of eagles flanked them;*
*the largest sports a rosette on a band on his wrist, like a watch—*
*a wristwatch measuring blossomings, measuring lives.*

They wore skirts, helmets, their beards were permanent-waved.
Carved in stone, enameled in brick, in chariots, on thrones,
always that resolute, unblinking profile of composure.

*Did they as they hunted feel sure of themselves,*
*did they believe they enacted what their cosmos demanded?*
*Did a god ring through them like a phone going off on a bus?*

On each block, each slab, each surface, a slave,
each bound with a cable of what must feel like steel;
their heads loll: hear them cry pitiably into the stone.

*Did they have gods who were evil others, like ours?*
*Even colder than they, indifferent, more given to fury,*
*vindictive, venomous, stutteringly stupid, like ours?*

Their forearms were striated like Blake's ghost of a flea's;
they never savaged themselves in their souls, though;
how lightly they bear the weight of their extinction.

*Coherence, things in proper relation, did it fail them?*
*Was unreason all around, and confusion and depression,*
*and no coherent, convincing model to explain why?*

They move left to right, right to left, like lanes of traffic.
They, too, perhaps, found no place to stand still, to judge,
to believe wickedness will never be forgotten or forgiven.

*Also gazelles, beasts of the air, and eyes which contain,*
*and ears which submit; dew of morn, blaze of noon,*
*the faces before you wild with the erotics of existence.*

And that coming someday to know how foolish,
even confronting the end of one's world, to think
one might spare oneself by doing away with oneself.

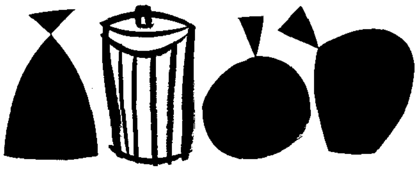
*Their palace doors were cedar strapped with stout bronze.*
*The lions, inexhaustibly fierce, never retreat, never give in.*
*One, off near a column of slaves, glares back at us as she dies.*

—*C. K. Williams*

Apple's behavior in those early days, "When it was egregious, which was often, it was never out of malice." Halberstam believes that young reporters at the *Times*—most of them edgy and competitive and still not certain that they deserved to be where they seemed to have fetched up—found Apple hard to take partly because of "a fear that he symbolized your own lesser self." That's not far from the notion that Apple differed from his contemporaries at the *Times* not so much in what he was like as in the fact that he let it show—or, in Crouse's shrewd phrase, that he stuck out "in a business populated largely by *shy* egomaniacs." In Halberstam's view, "It would be interesting to know what went on in Akron to produce this fearful insecurity—the ego, the unfinished quality that made him even worse than the rest of us."

Johnny Apple's father—Raymond Walter Apple, Sr., also known as Johnny—was, the junior Apple finally concluded, a hard case. He was the son of a skilled worker who mixed chemicals for glass. The family name had been Apfel; it was presumably changed around the time of the First World War, when there was a lot of ill feeling toward people with names reminiscent of the Hun. R. W. Apple, Sr., was a football star at Wittenberg University, a small Lutheran school in Ohio, and, as the family story is told, he fell in love with the homecoming queen, Julia Albrecht, whose equally German but considerably more prosperous family owned a lot of grocery stores that were to make the transition into a substantial Akron supermarket chain called Acme.

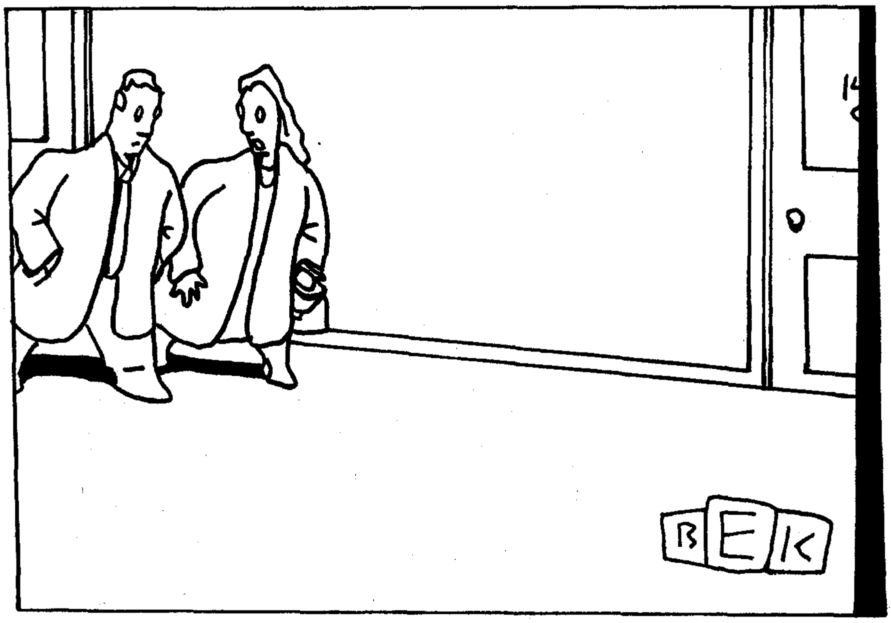
According to Johnny, Jr., his father's dream was to be a football coach, but, the homecoming queen having said that she didn't want to be married to a football coach, he came into her family's business—eventually helping to run it, apparently with the zeal of the converted. He tried his best to hide his disappointment that his only son was not an athlete, Johnny, Jr., says, but was less successful at accepting that son's decision not to go to work for Acme Markets. Nor did R. W. Apple, Sr., have much respect for the trade his son had chosen over running a successful supermarket chain. "He didn't think it was a legit way to make a living," Johnny, Jr., says. Apparently, R. W. Apple, Sr., never quite got over the notion that R. W. Apple, Jr., was spending his life in something akin to typing.



Earlier this year, I had a talk with Apple about his father. We were speaking in a small Gloucestershire cottage that the Apples bought while he was based in London, where he served as the *Times* bureau chief from 1977 until 1985. Johnny and Betsey Apple had come to rest at the cottage after a trip to the Far East that I had characterized as an attempt to break the world's single-trip expense-account record, now held by R. W. Apple, Jr. His parents, Apple said, had come to see him while he was London bureau chief, a job he revelled in. Like a lot of *Times* bureau chiefs over the years, he acquired some English airs and some English clothing. He was enthralled with British politics and some of the multidimensional people in it. He entertained grand people grandly, and he was once quoted as saying that the *Times* might never transfer him back to the United States, because his bosses at the paper wouldn't want to pay for transporting all of the wine he had in his cellar.

"I was proud of being the London bureau chief of the New York *Times*," he told me, in discussing his parents' visit. "It's not shit. Betsey had made the flat very pretty, and we had some of our most interesting friends to dinner. David and Debbie Owen, among others. I think Margaret Drabble was there. People who had something to say. And I thought, you know, I hope he's proud of me. I hope he finds it nice that I have this job and that I have interesting friends. We had a round table and David Owen asked me a question about something that was happening in the Middle East, and before I could answer, my father said, 'How the hell would *he* know?' And it went downhill from there."

I asked Apple if R. W. Apple, Sr., had ever come to respect what his son had accomplished as a journalist. "When they had their sixtieth-wedding anniversary, I was the m.c.," he said. "They had the same dinner—lobster Newburg on toast points—that they had in the same place, the Portage Country Club, sixty years be-



*"She already had someone taking care of dessert. We're bringing forced gaiety."*

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fore. Many of the same people, because they had stayed put. It was really quite a wonderful evening, and I hope I was modestly funny. And he didn't say anything to me afterward. But after he died, which was a year or two later, my mother said to me, 'You know, when we came home from that party at the club, we were taking off our clothes and he said to me, "Well, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe he *does* amount to something." ' I said, 'Mother!' And she said, 'What can I tell you?' "

Unable to match his father's athletic exploits, the younger Apple became a voracious consumer of information about sports and, eventually, the sports editor of the newspaper at Western Reserve Academy—an institution that reminds some people of a small New England boarding school in a small New England town, although the town, Hudson, is about halfway between Akron and Cleveland. By the time he got to Princeton and entered what was then called the "heeling competition" required of those who wanted to work on the *Princetonian*, his writing was already fluid enough to astonish his classmates—a fact he credits partly to the stern efforts of an English teacher at Reserve named Franklyn S. (Jiggs) Reardon, who, in class and on the student newspaper, demanded clear and concise prose. Young Apple had the nearly maniacal energy that eventually resulted in the back-to-back interviews and blizzard of telephone calls that characterized his political reporting. He was also displaying the sort of intense curiosity that can seem to suck all the information out of the room, although the focus of his curiosity was not always on the courses he had signed up to take.

At the time, the *Princetonian* had what amounted to a board of advisory grownups, and the managing editor of the *Wall Street Journal*—Barney Kilgore, who happened to live in Princeton—was among its members. Once Apple was informed that he would not be continuing at the university, Kilgore arranged for him to work at the *Journal*, and he eventually got his degree from the Columbia School of General Studies. The *Journal* employment lasted until there was a lengthy meeting to discuss why other bureaus were getting a certain type of piece in the paper so much more often than the New York bureau, and young Johnny Apple finally said, "Maybe they don't have to spend their time in chickenshit meetings like this."

At least that's Apple's story. I'm not sure I'd take it literally. Not that Apple is one of those reporters, much written about of late, whose copy has often been treated with some suspicion by their colleagues. (Some time before the revelations last spring that ended the editorship of Howell Raines and resulted in the departure of Jayson Blair and Rick Bragg, Apple says, he warned Raines that Bragg was such a reporter.) One foreign correspondent who often covered the same stories as Apple told me, "He's a very good and careful writer, but when he's talking there's some self-aggrandizement—a need to oversell and put the best coloration on his exploits." When Apple is talking about a decision at the *Times*, for instance, his first-person plural sometimes makes the decision sound like, in the words of one colleague, "what Arthur and I worked out." When I asked Apple the precise circumstances of his second expulsion from Princeton, he told me what he had once told Brian Lamb, of C-SPAN, during a television interview—that it came about because he'd criticized the university administration during a campaign the *Princetonian* was waging against anti-Semitism in the eating-club system. Many of his contemporaries on the *Princetonian* remember Apple fondly as a great character among the almost willfully bland undergraduates of the fifties Ivy League, but they're certain that nothing the newspaper wrote about the club system, a perennial target of the *Prince*, had anything whatever to do with his departure. Apple, when pressed, said that the dean, after citing papers unwritten and classes cut and chapel (then compulsory at Princeton) unattended, implied that some of these offenses might have been overlooked if Apple hadn't been such a troublemaker as chairman of the *Princetonian*. Although it's an oversimplification to say so, I think that people who have known Johnny Apple over the years tend to discount a bit whatever he says about himself and to trust whatever he writes in the New York *Times*.

Journalism is sometimes thought of as a field for generalists—a kind word for those contemporaries of mine who couldn't make a career decision—but the needs of a newspaper are often quite specific. So are the skills of most reporters. Apple was never thought of by his editors as an investigative reporter, for instance, but he became known as someone who could be dispatched to cover a story in unfamiliar territory—what is sometimes called in the trade "parachuting in." Given his ability to synthesize information quickly, he also became particularly valued at the *Times* as a writer of the lead-all—a piece on the far-right-hand column of the front page which essentially tells readers what has happened in various aspects of an important story since the last time they picked up the paper. A lead-all writer often has to worry about not only knitting together half a dozen disparate developments but also fending off editors in New York who would like all of those developments mentioned before the story jumps from the front page to the inside of the paper. Allan Siegal, a longtime assistant managing editor at the *Times* who was widely thought of as the editor in charge of standards even before he was formally given that title this month, has said that for a lead-all "you need bold synthesis at the top of a story. There are only three people in my time that I can remember doing it consistently: Scotty Reston, Max Frankel, and Apple—people who would write some encompassing statement of what had happened that day and only then go into the procedural details."

One of Apple's other great specialties became the news-analysis piece that is known at the *Times* as a Q-head, a form invented some years ago for James Reston when he was Washington bureau chief. A Q-head, which is supposed to reflect reporting rather than the writer's own views, is the sort of piece that, for instance, outlines the options open to a President facing an important decision, often within the context of how similar Presidential decisions played out in the past. Apple's willingness to sound authoritative—some would say Olympian—is an asset in writing Q-heads. So is his historical perspective. So is the fact that he is, as he puts it, "a natural centrist." Writing a balanced analytical piece is much more difficult for a reporter who, consciously or unconsciously, has a political agenda or a deep contempt for one side or the other. Trying to give me some idea of his political beliefs, Apple said during our talk in England that when he was the London bureau chief he found himself somewhat attracted by the policies of the Tory Wets and of the Social Democratic Party. If I had to categorize his politics in American terms, I'd say that he might be a Rockefeller Republican, if there were still such a thing as a Rockefeller Republican—both in the views he holds and in the fact that he does not hold them with great intensity. Like a lot of people who have spent many years reporting politics, he is engaged by the game but not by the ideology.

A Q-head is not necessarily a profound or blindingly original piece of work. Two or three days after it's written, it can look dated or even wrong, particularly in a constantly changing situation like war. When the military campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan seemed bogged down, for instance, Apple used some Vietnam analogies that were later criticized as not being predictive of how the war went. (John Leo's column in *U.S. News & World Report* was headlined "Quagmire, Schmagmire.") You could argue that some Q-heads, when all is said and done, amount to conventional wisdom, since they reflect the observations of people asked to assess the situation in terms of what happens, conventionally, when such situations occur.

All of that does not mean that there are any number of people on the *Times* who can consistently produce the sort of Q-heads the editors are looking for. According to the current executive editor, Bill Keller, the notion of running a Q-head often doesn't come up until the middle of the afternoon, making it "an intellectual wind sprint." Given the need for a twelve-hundred-word Q-head by six o'clock, someone who can actually file twelve hundred words of clean copy by six is immeasurably more valuable than someone who, although perhaps equally knowledgeable and equally thoughtful and equally conscientious about doing fresh reporting, is likely to turn in an eighteen-hundred-word piece with some tangled sentences in it sometime around six-thirty. Apple was once asked to give members of the Washington bureau what amounted to a master class in Q-head writing. The difficulty of replicating his touch with the form may be reflected in the fact that, long after he gave up the sort of daily Washington reporting that replenishes sources and stores up information for analytical pieces, the *Times'* coverage of a momentous event—the attack on the World Trade Center, for instance—tended to include a Q-head by R. W. Apple, Jr.

Andy Rosenthal, one of the people at the *Times* who tell Apple stories with good humor rather than clenched teeth, recalls that in 1999, a couple of years

*"That's for staying married for thirty-five years to a difficult woman."*

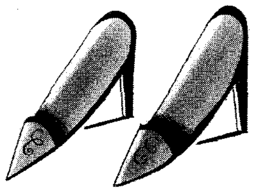
after Apple had turned his attention from government to the table, the Senate, in an unexpected vote, rejected the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Rosenthal, who was then on the foreign desk, called Apple at six in the evening to say that the paper needed what he called a "not since Versailles" Q-head. Apple, pointing out that his stepdaughter's rehearsal dinner was to take place at seven-thirty, berated Rosenthal for making such a request at such a time, and, an hour later, filed a Q-head. It was written in clear English. It had historical references to SALT II and the Panama Canal treaties and the tension between Woodrow Wilson and Henry Cabot Lodge during the formation of the League of Nations. It was one thousand one hundred and seventy-one words long. Eleven of those words were, like a tip of the hat to Rosenthal, "Not since the Versailles Treaty was voted down in November 1919 . . ."

In discussions of Apple-mellowing, nobody much goes for my theory that Johnny Apple was saved by gluttony. I'm still attracted by the notion, though, that his outsized supply of energy and drive and competitiveness was drained off at table, in the savoring of a decent Burgundy or the perfect crab cake. (I was present when he found what he described in the *Times* as his "nominee for the single best crab dish in Baltimore, if not the Western Hemisphere"—the jumbo-lump crab cake at Faidley Seafood, in the Lexington Market—and I can testify that his look of triumph did give him some resemblance to a very big four-year-old.) Some of the people who don't go for my theory say that Apple was a glutton to start with, and some, of course, believe that he has not yet been saved. I developed the theory in the mid-seventies, when Apple arrived in London as bureau chief. At the time, I mentioned one piece of evidence in a book, giving Apple the *nom de table* of Charlie Plum, as I have done in print now and then: "In an effort to find the perfect dining spot he had eaten in sixty French restaurants in London within a few months. (When Plum's friends are asked to name his principal charms, they often mention relentlessness.)"

Even before then, Apple had a serious interest in good meals and good wine. When he was in the Washington bureau in the early seventies, before he went to London, colleagues found that a casual "Let's get a bite of lunch" could mean going across the street to what was then one of the fanciest French restaurants in town and having a three-course meal with appropriate wine. Given the fact that most reporters think a bite of lunch has something to do with a B.L.T., Apple's food and wine standards became an obvious target for pranks: sending a bottle of Lancer's rosé over to his table during a political convention in Kansas City; phoning him in the guise of a fawning reader to ask his advice on the proper wine for wild, as opposed to domestic, goose; concocting a scheme in Iran to refill bottles Apple had obtained from the Shah's cellar with what Horace Rumpole would call the local plonk.

The pranks had no effect at all on Apple's dining habits. At some point during his long stint in London, he began putting his eating adventures into print, taking advantage of the fact that, as he puts it, "Americans, or at least New York *Times* readers, care about a broader spectrum of British life than they do about French or German or Japanese life." He is not the sort of food writer who makes reservations in the name of Nero Wolfe characters or slips in quietly disguised as the Korean consul-general. In restaurants or anywhere else, Apple seems more comfortable once the people he's dealing with are aware of his rank and station. The simplest description I've heard of his customary reception at a restaurant is "Everybody falls to the ground when Johnny walks in."

The Apple-at-table stories that don't involve his three-lunch capacity involve his standards. When his dining companion at the Kansas City restaurant, B. Drummond Ayres, then also of the *Times*, refused to let him send the bottle of Lancer's away—after a long day talking to politicians and a long wait for service, Ayres was ready to start in on any tipple available—Apple hid it under the table. On a Presidential visit Bill Clinton made to Africa, Apple had dinner one night in Kampala, Uganda, whose restaurant possibilities he had, of course, researched in some depth before leaving Washington. "We go to what Johnny has found out is the best Indian restaurant in the country," Maureen Dowd, who was in Apple's party that evening, told me. "We're the only ones in the restaurant. That would worry some people, but Johnny knows it's the right place because he's there." After tucking in his napkin, she went on, Apple said, in stentorian tones that seemed to be addressed to no one in particular, "No prawns at this altitude!" That remains a phrase that Apple watchers occasionally use to greet each other—"No prawns at this altitude!"



"Oscar Wilde said that a man who could command a London dinner table can rule the world," I was told not long ago by the legal philosopher Ronald Dworkin, who became friendly with Apple when the Apples lived in London, "and Johnny always commanded the dinner table." Dworkin was one of the eight people gathered for Apple's fiftieth-birthday luncheon, held at Gidleigh Park—a Devon country inn and restaurant that had been celebrated by Apple in the *Times* and eventually won what was apparently the first Michelin star ever awarded to an establishment run by Americans. (As a Midwesterner, albeit a Midwesterner with made-to-order English shirts, Apple is particularly proud that Paul and Kay Henderson, who run the place, both graduated from Purdue.) In a private dining room, the celebrants, including the Hendersons, consumed Beluga caviar, sautéed foie gras with quince sauce, salad of red mullet and lettuce with olive-oil-and-coriander dressing, tagliatelle with white truffles, partridge mousse with morels and spinach, roasted saddle of hare, Muenster and single Gloucester cheeses, mango and eau-de-vie-de-poire sorbets, *gâteau marjolaine*, coffee, and six wines—all from 1934, the year of Apple's birth. "Around five or five-thirty, I was as close to death by eating as I've ever been," Dworkin told me. "We were about to break up and go up to the bedroom and have a nap. Then Apple was saying, 'We have to have a talk about dinner. Just a quick word. We've eaten rather well. So something simple. I have an idea. The truffles that came with the tagliatelle came boxed in rice. You could make us a risotto out of the rice the truffles came in. Let's have a Saint-Julien, a late-growth Saint-Julien. A '79 would be all right.'"

Much of this eating and travel is, of course, underwritten by the *Times*. When it comes to what Homer Bigart used to call "feeding at the Sulzberger trough," it is widely acknowledged that R. W. Apple, Jr., is without peer. Joe Lelyveld, who even as executive editor was not known for demanding a prime position at the trough, once stopped in London when he was the foreign editor and took his bureau chief to dinner—a lavish dinner, as it turned out, since his bureau chief was R. W. Apple, Jr. When the check arrived, Apple reached over to scoop it up. "You better let me take this," he said. "They'd never believe it coming from you."

I once suggested to Apple that he bequeath his expense accounts to the Smithsonian Institution. "But the *Times* has them," he said. "I turned them in." He sounded a bit regretful, it seemed to me, that he was not in a position to give posterity an opportunity to inspect some of his more stunning creations. At the *Times*, the various departments have what is called a cost center—what amounts to a budget line. The foreign desk has a cost center. The editorial board has a cost center. R. W. Apple, Jr., has a cost center. "It's been my fate and privilege over the years to sit next to various people who were approving Apple's expense accounts," Al Siegal says. "There were hoots, and once in a while you'd look up and the person—these were various assistant managing editors—was shaking his head and reading off 'Wine from my cellars . . .'" Siegal, who is a great admirer of R. W. Apple, Jr., thinks that, all in all, the *Times* has received good value.

Asked about having his own cost center, Apple is suddenly overcome with modesty. "It's because I write for all these different parts of the paper," he told me. Not long ago, Apple was appointed an associate editor of the *Times*, a position that is something of an honorific, and some acquaintances asked what difference the new title would make, since he already seemed to do whatever he wanted. Before being named associate editor, Apple said, there were two hotels he could not stay in on his expense account. Now, as he interprets company policy, he can.

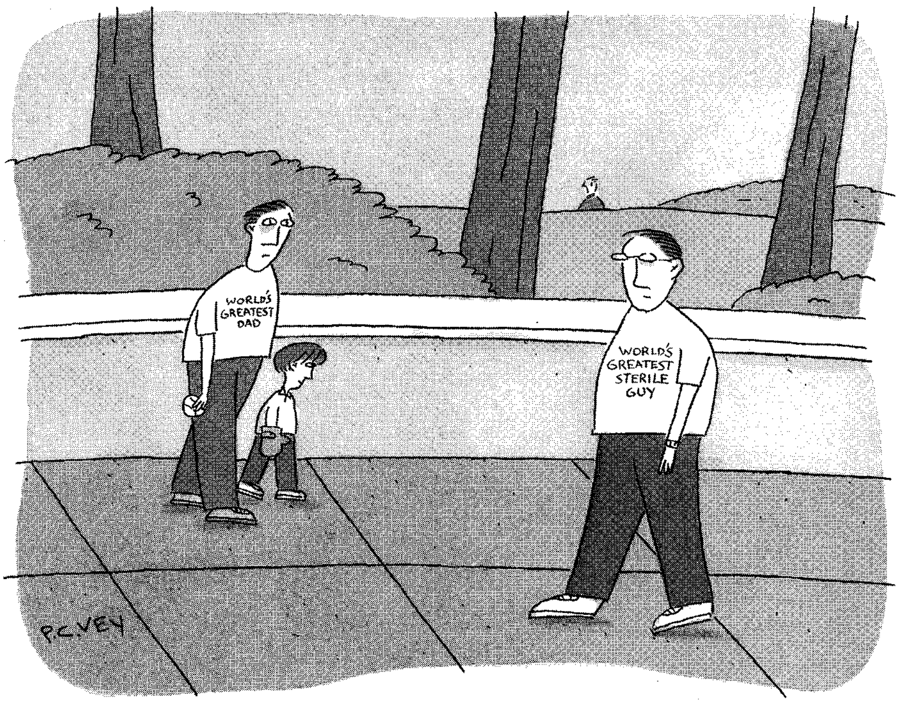
*"They've redesigned our cubicles."*

• •

In 1979, after covering the revolution in Iran, R. W. Apple, Jr., then the London bureau chief of the *Times*, and some other foreign correspondents had a long lunch in Paris at a tiny Lyonnaise restaurant called Cartet, near the Place de la République. In Iran, Apple had apparently been brilliant in organizing what amounted to a press pool to cover Ayatollah Khomeini's arrival in Tehran. By chance, the editor of the *International Herald Tribune*, whose editorial headquarters is in Paris, had just left the paper, and, after considerable wine had been consumed, a couple of those present decided that Apple should be the *Trib's* new editor. Apple apparently began by dismissing the notion but eventually said—according to Jonathan Randal, an old friend of his who was then with the Washington *Post*—"Well, if you're so God-damned smart, make it happen."

It did not happen—memories vary on just why—but the conversation reflected a realization by Apple and his friends, even when he was only forty-five, that R. W. Apple, Jr., was unlikely to rise on the masthead of the *Times*. The London posting had been widely seen as a sort of consolation prize for not being named chief of the Washington bureau, a seventy-reporter operation whose management involves responsibilities that have something in common with those carried by the executive editor. One mellowing theory holds that Apple's own realization that he wasn't going to run the *Times* uncoupled him from one of the engines powering his competitiveness, but Apple himself has always said that he never had any desire to be executive editor of the *Times*. Some of his friends believe that under severe torture he might at least own up to having wanted to be managing editor.

Nearly fifteen years later, the *Times* did make Apple the Washington bureau chief. He held the job for five years, but it did not turn out to be among the high points in his career. Apple says he was conscious of trying not to be what's known in the trade as a big foot, a cele-



brated reporter who takes over major stories from the person on the beat—he was aware that a previous bureau chief had been presented at his going-away party with a size-18 sneaker—but at the end of the day, I was told by someone who spent years at the *Times*, "Johnny is a performer. You can't be a performer and manage the Washington bureau." Also, Apple was away a lot. People who were there say that Andy Rosenthal, who was what the *Times* calls the Washington editor, actually managed the bureau. "He would introduce me to people as his No. 2," Rosenthal told me cheerfully. "As if he were the lord of the admiralty." Rosenthal was involved in an Apple story treasured by people who worked in the bureau in those years. Apple, infuriated that another reporter's political story from the same region had made the front page while his hadn't, was heard to shout at his No. 2, "I will not be little-footed!"

Apple's tenure as bureau chief ended in 1997. "He could still make calls into the Clinton White House, often at a level or two higher than the beat reporters could," one of his editors told me, but, particularly after the congressional-election sweep engineered by Newt Gingrich in 1994, Apple was less in tune with legislators. During our talk in Gloucestershire, he said, "Different sorts of people began to be elected to Congress, and they behaved in a different ways. They didn't go to each other's houses. In many cases, they didn't even have houses. Many of them slept in their offices. And this was one of the elements that led to this constant nastiness rather than debate. Furthermore, you began to have fewer and fewer people around who were truly expert in any field, and few left around who are what I always thought of as the mud that holds the straw of the deeply partisan together. As it became much more adversarial and much less substantive, it slipped away from me. I don't mean that I didn't understand it, but I didn't want to live my life in the middle of it."

It was not the first time that Apple had lost his trademark enthusiasm for the task at hand. A decade earlier, just after he'd returned from London to be the *Times'* chief Washington correspondent, there had been a period when he seemed to have lost interest in pursuing the usual political stories or even in showing up regularly at the bureau. "That was a precursor of finally deciding I just don't want to do this again and again and again," he told me. "I loved doing it when there was a big story running and I could make a contribution. But just to write routine political and foreign stuff, I thought, Oh man!" Newspaper reporting of the sort that regularly results in front-page stories in the *Times*—that is, reporting that has to do with politics or government or foreign policy—is repetitious work. A lot of distinguished reporters eventually get the feeling that they've done what is essentially the same story one too many times. Some of them become columnists, but that was not in store for Apple. The absence of an ideological point of view may be an advantage in a Q-head writer but it is a disadvantage in a columnist. At the *Times*, Apple was regarded as someone with a nearly encyclopedic knowledge of politics, but not as a singular political thinker. Whether or not he ever yearned for a column, as some of his friends maintain, he now says that it wouldn't have been a good fit. "I'm not any good at writing columns in which I say what this country needs or what the world needs is the following," he told me. "I see two sides to too many things."

The path he did take had its origin in his days in the London bureau, when he had begun to write about food and travel. Toward the end of his stint as bureau chief, he'd written a series of travel pieces in Europe—pieces that were eventually collected in a book called "Apple's Europe." At the time, Apple's increasing interest in writing about bistros and cathedrals was causing some uneasiness among his masters in New York. But, looking back recently on the sort of writing he had done toward the end of his London stay, Apple said, "That was sort of the beginning of my reinventing myself."

Not long after he stepped down as Washington bureau chief, the *Times* made Apple something called chief correspondent—essentially a ticket to write about whatever interested him. Betsey Apple—who, together with her children, can be thought of as another theory of what mellowed R. W. Apple, Jr.—had suggested a travel series about American cities similar to the series Apple had done in Europe. As the trips evolved, she was usually at the wheel while her husband deconstructed the maps with an adroitness that presumably comes from having had to find his way around strange cities in a hundred and nine different countries. She continued in that role in the next series, on food, in which she is routinely mentioned once in each piece, more or less in the way Hitchcock put in a fleeting appearance in each movie. Last fall, at the Southern Foodways Alliance conference on barbecue, in Oxford, Mississippi, Betsey Apple introduced herself to one of the participants by saying, "I'm Betsey. I drive Mister Daisy."

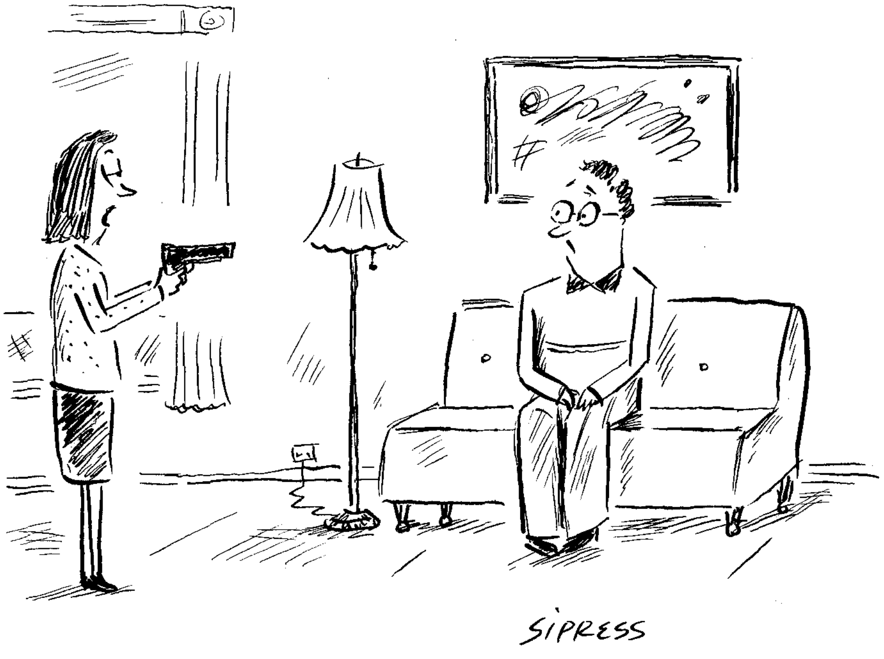
Apple watchers have interpreted Apple's emergence as a food writer in a number of ways. Some of them see it as the *Times* rewarding so many years of extraordinary service by putting Apple out to a particularly luxuriant pasture. Some see it as Apple's response to having been deprived of the few rewards of the business that have not been bestowed on him—a column or a Pulitzer or an editorship—by following the maxim that living well is the best revenge. Bill Keller and his recent predecessors see it as extending into the so-called special sections of the paper—the sections that increasingly are becoming fundamental to the identity of the *Times* and to its commercial well-being—the work of a reporter who is, in Keller's words, "as much a marquee name in the food section as he is in the political pages." That's the way Apple sees it.

The change in portfolio has made Apple an unusual figure in Washington. He retains all the trappings associated with members of what is sometimes called the permanent government. He has a house in Georgetown. He has known most of the capital's principal players for years. (He met George Bush and Al Gore in 1970, when they were serving their fathers as drivers in unsuccessful Senate campaigns; the President, it almost goes without saying, calls him Juanito.) But what he normally writes about day to day is not, say, the future of the North Atlantic alliance but where to find herring that actually tastes like herring. Apple's friends like to tease him about the switch in subject matter. But they believe that he has emerged triumphant at a time in his career when a lot of reporters who never came in from the field are faced with a choice I used to think of as the Ottawa bureau or the bottle. The byline of R. W. Apple, Jr., still regularly appears in the *Times*, often on stories from places that make his colleagues muse on what the fanciest hotel there is really like. "He's got a second act," Ben Bradlee said of Apple not long ago, "and he probably has others up his sleeve, just in case he eats all the food in the world."

With R. W. Apple, Jr., triumph is a given. He approaches food writing the same way he approached political reporting or war reporting or parachuting in. In preparation for the Baltimore piece that uncovered the blissful crab cake, he told me, he had reread some Mencken and reread some of Russell Baker's memoir of growing up in Baltimore and spent a lot of time on the Internet and on the phone. When he wasn't indulging in one of his three lunches in Baltimore, he was in his room finishing up a piece on the early-twentieth-century East Bay architect Bernard Maybeck ("a precursor of the modern movement like Otto Wagner in Vienna, Charles Rennie Mackintosh in Glasgow, Victor Horta in Brussels, and the brothers Charles and Henry Greene in Pasadena") and a travel piece on Bermuda that began, "When Claudio Vigilante was a waiter at Le Gavroche, the last redoubt of classic French haute cuisine in London . . ."

At the time I spoke to Apple in Gloucestershire, he had sixteen or seventeen notebooks filled with research from the Far East trip, but it seemed likely he'd be interrupted by war in Iraq before he transformed them all into *Times* stories. The *Times*' plans for war coverage included calling him from the table for Q-head duty. When the war started, Apple did return to writing Q-heads—which, as it turned out, drew some of the same sort of criticism that had been directed at him during the Afghanistan campaign. Keller believes that, as the *Times* allows more analytical writing in news stories, it is becoming less tied to the notion that "every big news event has to be accompanied by a story about what you were supposed to think about that news event." Still, at the time when war with Iraq seemed imminent, an old *Times* hand told me that it would probably constitute what the management considered "a Johnny Apple moment."

By late spring, Apple was mining the notebooks. The Asia trip had been designed to produce eight pieces for the *Times*, not to speak of a piece on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Gidleigh Park. He had already published a piece on eating dim sum in Hong Kong, but he had before him a piece on Vietnamese pho and a piece on mangosteens in Bangkok and a piece on pepper in Kerala and a piece on Keralan cuisine and a travel piece on Bangkok. A lengthy piece on Singapore street food appeared in the *Times* earlier this month. The reporting, if that's the word, had required eighteen eating stops in a single, sixteen-hour day. Cautioned by his guide to taste rather than eat, Apple wrote, "I tried, but I failed. More gourmand than gourmet, I finished much of what was put before me." Presumably, he will now be referred to by some—maybe even by me—as Eighteen Lunches Apple. Relentlessness remains one of Charlie Plum's principal charms. ♦



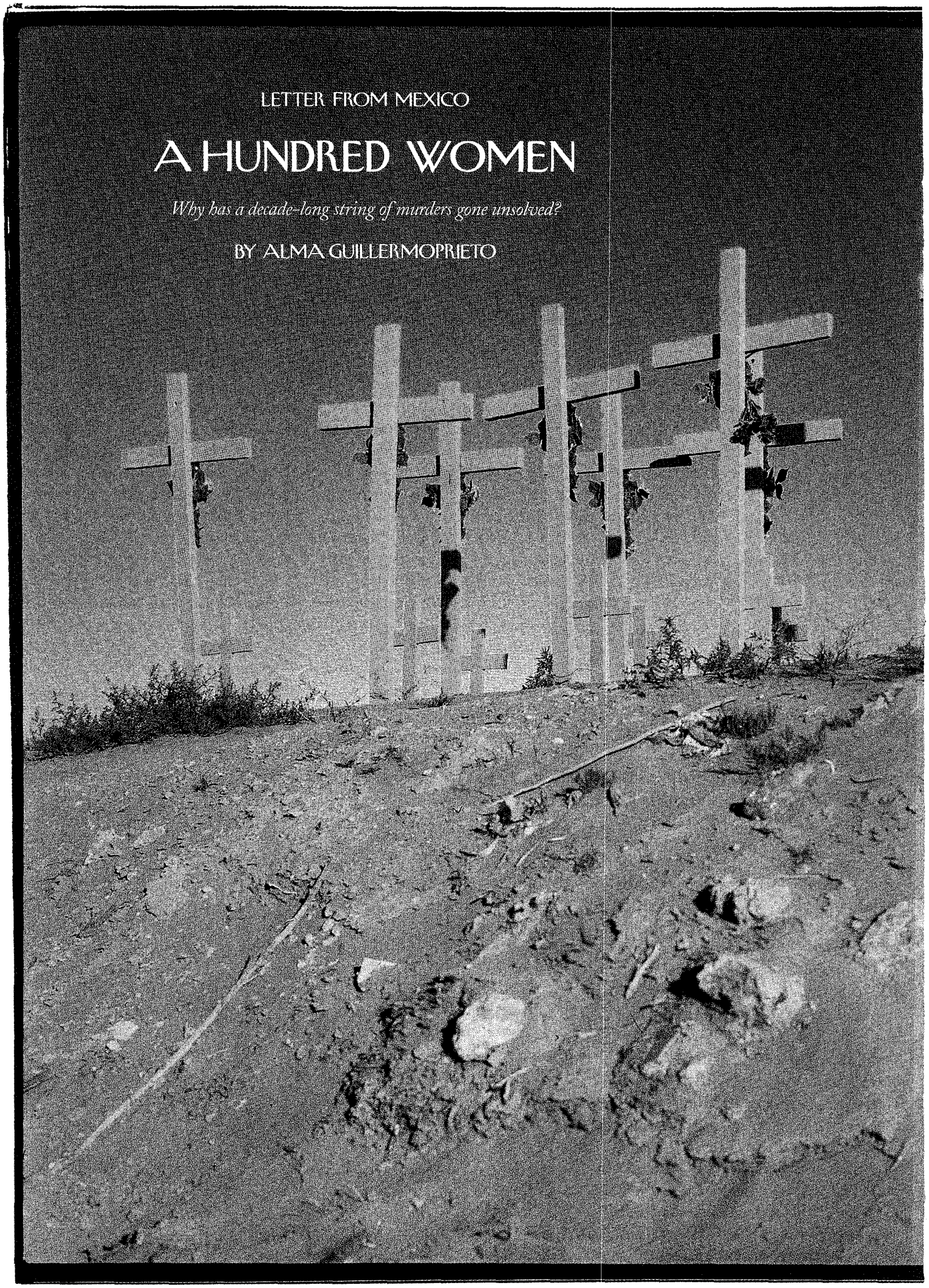
*"I'm sorry, but someone has to put a stop to this endless cycle of apologizing."*

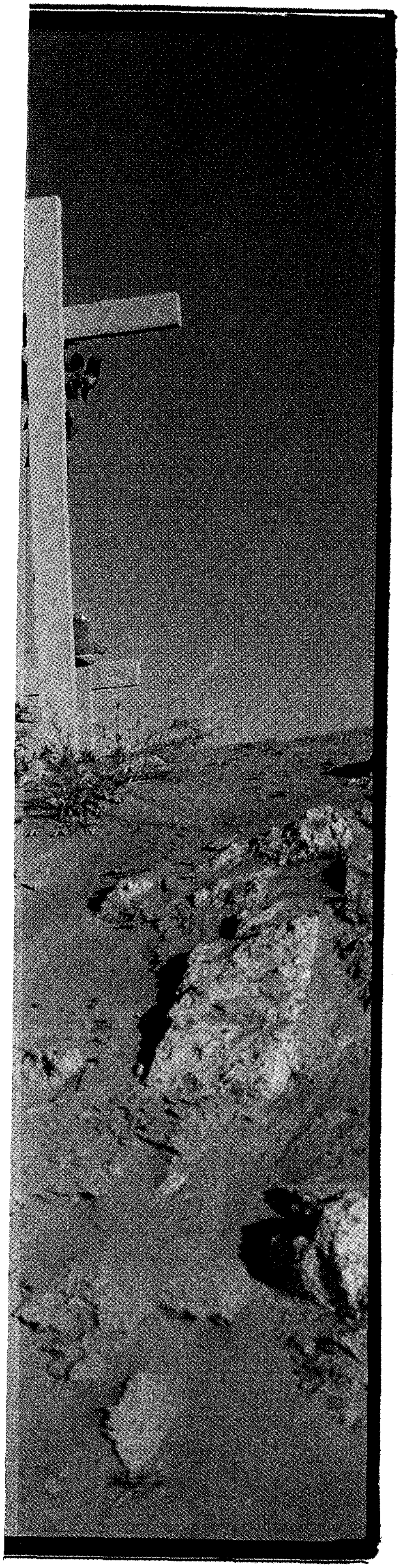
LETTER FROM MEXICO

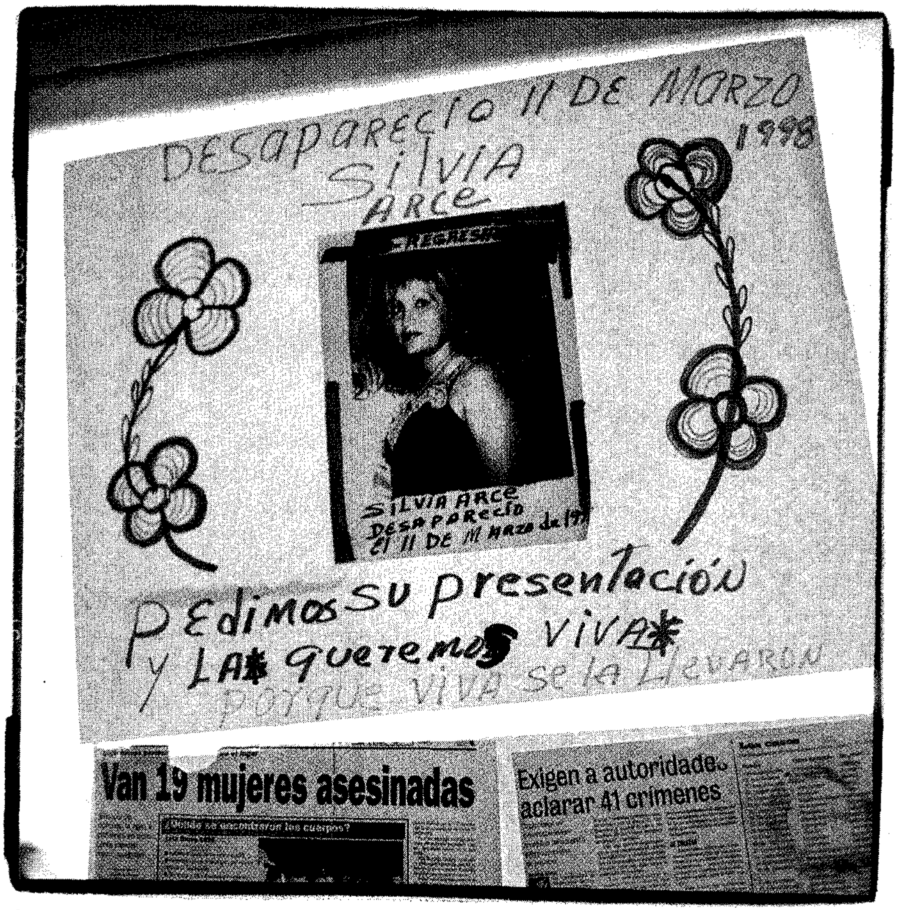
# A HUNDRED WOMEN

*Why has a decade-long string of murders gone unsolved?*

BY ALMA GUILLERMOPRIETO






DESAPARECIO 11 DE MARZO 1998
SILVIA ARCE
SILVIA ARCE DESAPARECIO EL 11 DE MARZO de 1998
PEDIMOS SU PRESENTACIÓN
Y LA QUEREMOS VIVA
PORQUE VIVA SE LA LLEVARON
Van 19 mujeres asesinadas
Exigen a autoridades aclarar 41 crímenes

*A site in Juárez where bodies of murdered women were found. A tribute to a missing woman reads, "She was alive when they took her." Photographs by Thomas Kern.*

Long before her current troubles began, Cynthia Kiecker de Perzábal knew that Mexico had changed her life. When she was growing up, in Minnesota, she vacationed with her family here year after year. When she was a freshman at the University of Minnesota, she told me proudly, she travelled to Mexico City with the college marching band and played her saxophone at Aztec Stadium. In high school, she had wanted to become an actress, but instead, in 1979, after a year of college, she moved to Mexico and studied art in San Miguel de Allende. As she entered adulthood, her sense of what was important in life appears to have changed; she adopted the name Cheyenne and took up a wandering sort of existence, moving from one city to another, from plaza to plaza, selling bead-and-wire jewelry she made. In 1985, at the age of twenty-six, she met a Mexican street musician named Javier Perzábal, who had adopted the name of Ulises; a few months later, she married him, and he began making jewelry, too. Eventually, the couple wound up in Chihuahua City, the capital of Chihuahua, a vast desert state abutting the Rio Grande, whose most famous city is Ciudad Juárez.

A small, wiry woman with long blond hair and clear blue eyes, Kiecker looks lovely in a photograph taken three years ago, fair skin glowing in contrast to that of the handsome Ulises, who has dark skin, piercing Aztec eyes, high cheekbones, and waist-length jet-black hair. Kiecker says that she sees herself as an *artesana*, a craftsperson, and not as a hippie, which is how conservative-minded Chihuahuenses had grown used to thinking about her and her husband over the years—a weird but inoffensive long-haired hippie couple.

In recent years, the couple's life seemed to be acquiring greater structure; improved sales of their wares—something to do with the current vogue in shoulder-length earrings, perhaps, or a loosening of Chihuahuan mores—al-

LOOKAT

lowed them to move their enterprise off the street and into a curious little slat-board store downtown. The couple also rented a small house on a quiet street in a working-class neighborhood near the center of town, where they had a cordial relationship with neighbors who, like them, are not prosperous enough to have a phone. Chihuahua City is a prim and orderly place, with neatly laid-out streets and parks, well-run public services, and a low crime rate. High temperatures can be a problem, and boredom, too, but the Perzábals liked their house and their livelihood. In general, life was good.

According to the Perzábals, shortly before midnight on May 29th they were at home, working on their jewelry. They had recently received a shipment of new supplies, and Cynthia says that she was sitting in the bedroom with Ulises, admiring a beautiful jade butterfly and imagining an appropriate setting for it, when they heard ferocious shouts and crashing noises at their front door. Within seconds, they saw an axe, or a bludgeon of some sort, break through the door and, behind it, five or six men wearing civilian clothes, all armed with submachine guns. The intruders shoved the couple, kicked them, swore at them, and attempted to gag them with the clothes lying around the room. Ulises says that he tried to protect Cynthia, but he was thrown to the floor and immobilized almost immediately. Cynthia, panic-stricken, was shoved into a waiting van; Ulises was dragged out by the hair and dumped into the back of a pickup truck. Cynthia struggled to breathe after the men placed a sack made of some sort of plastic over her head. She heard a neighbor try to deter their abduction by shouting, "I'm videotaping you!" (a bluff, she assumes), and then the couple were taken to a place they subsequently identified as the former Chihuahua State Police Academy.

No one knew where they were. By their account, they were held in adjoining rooms and were kicked, beaten, and tortured for the next forty-eight hours. In the end, they signed documents confessing to the murder of a sixteen-year-old girl named Viviana Rayas, the daughter of a prominent local labor leader. Willy-nilly, the Perzábals were now leading characters in the most shameful human-rights scandal in Mexico's recent history: a string of brutal killings of young women which came to be called the Juárez murders, because they seemed to be confined—in the public imagination, at least—to one seedy border town.

"This one allows release of your information to a sitcom."

A graceless, sprawling city more than two hundred miles north of Chihuahua City, Juárez is as garish as the capital is straitlaced. There are highways, fast-food stops, drab shopping malls, a couple of parks, and, everywhere, the *yonkes*—junk yards—where mountains of battered cars are piled so high on either side of the road that one seems to be driving through a canyon. In winter, the plywood-and-corrugated-plastic shacks on the outskirts provide no shelter from the frost. In summer, the heat melts the asphalt. The cheesy night clubs and topless bars along the main highways are where Stateside boys go when they come over from neighboring El Paso to get wasted.

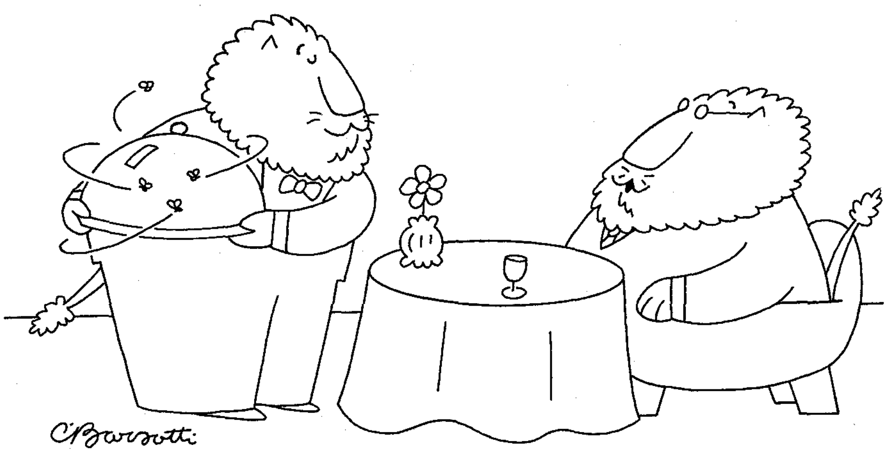
The rootless nature of Juárez is like a mold in the atmosphere. About half of its million and a half residents came from their native towns and villages sometime in the last quarter century, looking for work in the foreign assembly plants known as *maquiladoras*. The uprooted immigrants live in sullen shantytowns—where a high number of households are presided over by unmarried, divorced, or abandoned women—and seem to have lost the essential inner compass that points back home. In the early nineteen-nineties, the international drug cartels decided that Juárez, with its border location, its table-dance joints, and its floating population, was a good place for an outpost. Within a few years, and as the violence that accompanied the drug racket escalated, people began finding the decomposed or calcified bodies of young women and girls along the city's desert outskirts—victims of a murder spree that has resulted in more than a hundred deaths so far, first in Juárez, but now, frighteningly, in other parts of Chihuahua state.

Among the first victims to be noticed in the crime pages of the local press was a thirteen-year-old girl from a poor background, Alma Chavira Farel, whose death is still used as the marker of the official count. Her corpse was found in January of 1993 in an empty lot in a middle-class neighborhood—she had been raped, beaten, and strangled, the brief news story said—but there is to

this day no explanation of why a young girl's violated body might have ended up in such a place. The following May, the body of another raped and strangled victim, name unknown, was found. She was discovered on the slopes of the Cerro Bola, a high hill with the words "Read the Bible" lettered on it, which overlooks Juárez. A third corpse appeared in June. This girl had been stabbed and set on fire. Another anonymous victim, found on the banks of the Rio Grande, had been raped, impaled, and knifed to death; her head had been bashed in. In 1993, Esther Chávez, who had recently founded a human-rights lobbying group and had a weekly column on feminist issues in the Juárez daily *El Diario*, read accounts of the murders in the paper's crime pages. She began to take notice, keep count, and write about the killings. It was the first time that the murder of women in Juárez had been treated as an issue of public concern. It was years before the rest of the country paid attention.

I went to Chávez's tidy middle-class home in Juárez late one afternoon to rummage through a few of the boxes of files she keeps in her study. The press clips made it clear that the victims were for the most part *maquiladora* workers, high-school students, and shop clerks. They were invariably young: the largest cluster of victims were between fifteen and twenty years old, and they were slender, dark-skinned, dark-haired, and pretty. Their most important characteristic, however, had to do with race and class: dark-skinned, long-haired young girls waiting at a bus stop or emerging from a factory are likely to come from families that are poor and nearly defenseless in a bureaucratic, overloaded, and user-hostile legal system. I found a dearth of credible suspects in the clips, or even police sketches of possible assailants, but there was a numbing quantity of photographs of victims' relatives, holding banners and demanding justice in endless marches and demonstrations, or denouncing the offensive treatment they had themselves received at the hands of the police—the jokes, the laughter, the obscene insinuations about the victims' secret lives. When I left her study, Chávez, a petite, even-tempered, and self-possessed woman of seventy, was in the living room in a favorite chair, nursing her daily treat of a whiskey-on-the-rocks. Since she began keeping track of the murders in Juárez, she has counted ninety-six "feminicides," or sexual homicides—women whose deaths didn't seem to be part of a larger wave of killings by husbands, pimps, gigolos, neighbors, stepfathers, and the like. The bodies of the victims—strangled or beaten to death, often raped and, sometimes, hideously mutilated—are found in the desert days or months after the girls fail to come home. Their faces are often disfigured, the skulls crushed. The autopsies sometimes reveal that they were kept alive for days before being killed. "You know, when I first started looking into these murders, and I found out how these girls had died, I didn't sleep for days," Chávez recalled. "I kept thinking about how, in their final hours, they must have prayed for death." She pondered for a while. "I thought that it was just a question of getting the information out, so people would know what was happening, and then it would stop. I thought it would all be over after a few months. And now it's ten years later and nothing has changed."

Just three years ago, Mexican voters, electing a new President, decisively overturned a seventy-year-old authoritarian regime. The victor, Vicente Fox, has continued the policy started by his immediate predecessors, Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo, to greatly reduce federal power and devolve both tax monies and authority to the state and municipal levels. One result has been stronger local governments—or, where citizens are passive, stronger local rulers—and also a weakened Presidency. Vicente Fox, a gifted campaigner, as President has shown himself indifferent to the actual business of governing. Only after years of pleading by human-rights lobbying groups like the one founded by Esther Chávez in Juárez did the federal government agree, in July, to intervene in what it has long insisted was a purely local law-enforcement situation. In a damning special report issued in August,



*"Ah, Louis, I can tell already that it's going to be terrific."*

• •

Amnesty International decried the lack of progress in human-rights issues in general under President Fox, and, in particular, the federal government's mishandling of the unconscionably long list of Juárez murders. At the state level, the report focussed specifically on police indifference to the plight of victims' families, a trail of confessions obtained through torture to gain questionable convictions, and incidents in which disfigured corpses have been returned to grieving parents—only to have the parents subsequently conclude that the corpse, though dressed in recognizable remnants of their daughter's clothing, isn't their daughter. Irene Kahn, the Secretary-General of Amnesty International, told me that the murders "are just one example of the failure of justice in Mexico. We see all the delays, torture, negligence, fabrication of evidence, open discrimination against women that we have seen in many other situations in Mexico, but here it's very clear and blatant, and that's why it's so important. And it's been going on for the last ten years."

There are many theories about these killings. According to opinion polls, most Mexicans believe that the girls are murdered so that their organs can be extracted for transplants for wealthy patients in the United States. None of the recognizable remains found so far have been missing internal organs, but this theory has great symbolic weight. For many years, more serious speculation centered on an unnamed group of *narcosatánicos*, who might be using the girls in atrocious rituals. Recently, greater attention has been paid to the possibility that members of the various police forces are murdering the girls for sport. Perhaps, as some well-informed observers on both sides of the border believe, the killers are what are known as "Juniors," scions of Mexico's ruling élite, out on a hunting spree. No theory is sufficient to explain all the crimes, and none necessarily exclude the others. And, if all the theories seem inevitably to lead to paranoid and convoluted conclusions, it must be said that no theory is as demented as the crimes themselves. There is to date no legal evidence, in any case, pointing convincingly in any particular direction.

In Juárez, Manuel Esparza, who is the official spokesman for the Chihuahua investigative police—the *judiciales*—received me in a bare, uncomfortable office in the former Juárez police academy, not far from a stretch of desert where the bodies of eleven victims have been found over the years.

Esparza, who is surprisingly young—thirty-two—and garrulous, is also the chief of agents for the special investigative branch of the *judiciales* in charge of murders of women. He told me that since 1998, when Patricio Martínez was elected governor of Chihuahua and appointed Jesús Solís as his attorney general, police work has become in all ways more efficient. A map is being put together to match all the information about each victim with the site at which the body had been found. A special unit for crimes against women has been created. The F.B.I. has been invited to provide training and advice, and has done so.

The careers of Solís and Martínez have been linked at least since 1993, when Martínez was elected mayor of Chihuahua City and appointed Solís to head the municipal police. Published rumors regarding Solís's possible involvement in the drug trade have hounded him (and been angrily denied) since then, and over the years numerous complaints have been filed accusing him of participating directly in acts of police brutality against the citizenry.

According to Esparza, one serial murderer, or an association of murderers, was responsible for twenty-five of the crimes in Juárez to date. Even though it is well known that serial killers are hard to find, Esparza said, his people had arrested all the criminals involved in those twenty-five murders. The other murders, he went on, including the recent ones, could be attributed to imitators.

The most notorious arrest took place in 1995, three years before Martínez's election, when Abdel Latif Sharif Sharif, an Egyptian resident of Juárez with a long arrest record in the United States for assault and battery of women, was accused of seven of the Juárez murders. He was tried in 1999, and in the end convicted only of one, the murder of seventeen-year-old Elisabeth Castro. In the view of human-rights activists and journalists who have examined the Sharif trial record, there is no substantial evidence linking him to Elizabeth Castro's murder—a conclusion that Amnesty International concurs in. Sharif, throughout his years of imprisonment, has insisted that he is innocent.

In 1999, with Governor Martínez and Attorney General Solís in power, a thirteen-year-old girl managed to escape from a bus driver, employed on one of the *maquiladora* routes, who had tried to rape and kill her. He and some of his fellow-drivers were subsequently accused of killing several young women on Sharif's orders (the prosecution argues that Sharif, who was in jail at the time, commissioned the murders in order to prove his own innocence), but these cases, too, seem to be full of holes, and none of the accused have been sentenced.

Just last month, Sharif was charged with seven more of the Juárez murders—also carried out from jail under his orders, the accusation says.

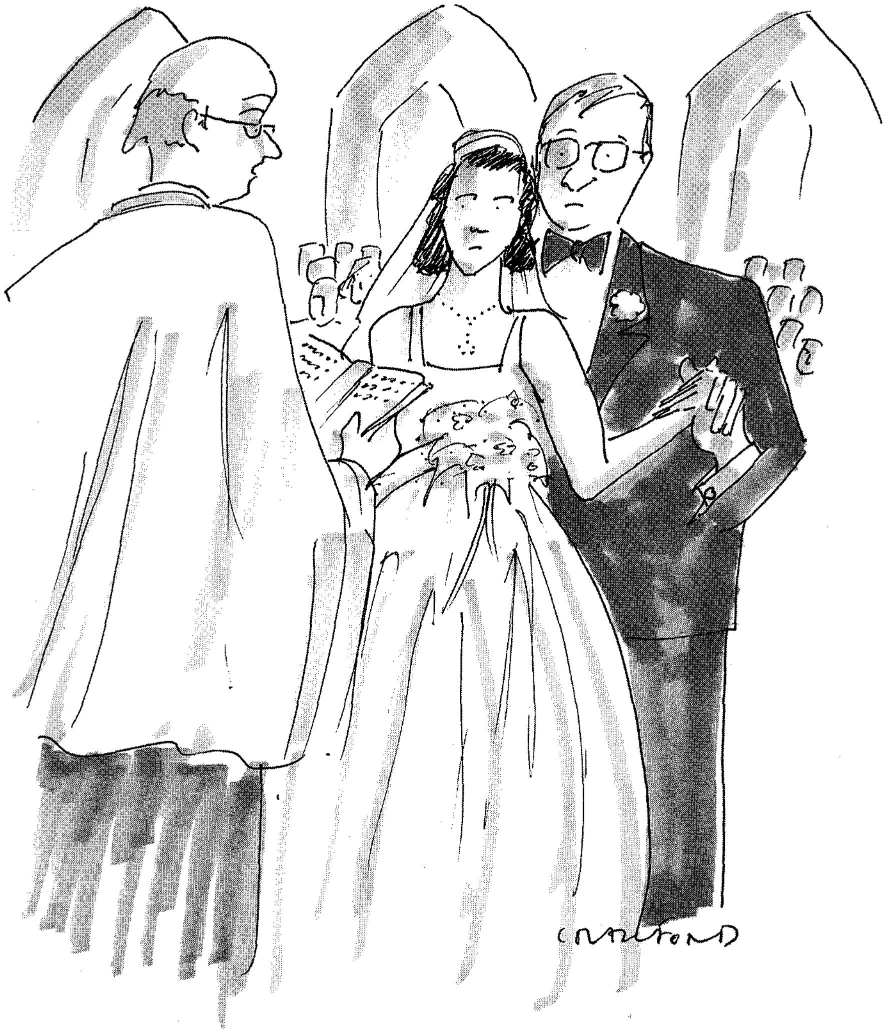
Two years ago, two other bus drivers were detained and accused of killing eight young girls whose bodies had been found days earlier near a well-travelled avenue in Juárez. The suspects were not allowed to talk at their perp walk, but they removed their clothing to reveal burn marks and bruises, which the prison medical examiner subsequently identified as evidence of torture. When the press questioned an official from the attorney general's office about this, he explained that the wounds had been self-inflicted. One of the drivers died in custody in February. His lawyer, Mario Escobedo Anaya, who was outspoken in his denial of his client's guilt, had been killed by police a year earlier; the officers involved said that they had confused the lawyer with a fugitive criminal, though it is not clear why they would have. (Escobedo Anaya was talking to his father on his cell phone at the time of the shooting.) The police were cleared of all charges a few months later, on the ground that they had acted in self-defense. Innocent or not, the surviving bus driver, after three years in jail, still has not been sentenced.

The media and the human-rights activists who monitor these cases had assumed that the killings of young girls were a phenomenon defined by the Juárez border mentality, its transient and economically deprived population, and a burgeoning drug culture. Then the killings spread from Juárez to the capital. In the past four years, fifteen young women and teen-age girls have disappeared in broad daylight from the streets of Chihuahua City, having been last seen leaving the *maquiladoras* in which they worked, or the schools where they studied, or their homes to go shopping. Nine corpses have been found in the mesquite desert around the city, strangled and disfigured and possibly raped, and police say they have identified six of them.

On Sunday, March 16th, at about four in the afternoon, a Chihuahua City labor leader named José Rayas dropped off his daughter Viviana at a park near the city's downtown area, where she was going to do homework with some classmates. Viviana, a quiet, thin, and childish-looking sixteen-year-old with long dark hair and big Mexican eyes, was last seen by her classmates an hour and a half later as they left her at a bus stop near the park. When her parents returned home from a family visit at eight o'clock that evening, they learned that she hadn't come home.

José Rayas is a stocky man with sad eyes whose face and body seem to be puddling at the bottom. His voice is soft, he wears no diamond jewelry or gold chains, and his demeanor is modest. In other words, he does not look like what he is: the general secretary of the Chihuahua section of the Workers' Union of the Communications and Transport Ministry—which controls the nation's highways and airports and its radio and television networks. Before the murder of Viviana Rayas, the killers had preyed on poor families, but her case was different: in a state that is about as large as Oregon and has barely three million inhabitants, and whose numerous foreign-assembly factories rely on an efficient and well-maintained highway network, Viviana Rayas's father is an extremely powerful individual, and one skilled in playing hardball.

Viviana was the youngest and most cosseted of José Rayas's three daughters. He and his wife, Columba Arellanes de Rayas, called her Baby, until she begged them to stop, and they switched to Bibis. They doted on her delicate ways and her love of poetry. After her disappearance, Rayas hardly bothered with the police; he mobilized his entire union chapter instead. Truck drivers reported any suspicious movement along the highways, repairmen in the city set up lookout posts, investigators fanned out through the downtown area chasing even the flimsiest clues. Mostly, Rayas told me, he concentrated on a string of



*"Until the weapons of mass destruction are found."*

anonymous phone calls that started after he went on television to ask for help in finding his daughter. He followed through on every tip. Young women called to turn in their estranged boyfriends. Children denounced strict parents. On the face of it, the police were coöperative: Rayas says that they hardly ever came up with their own leads, but they always investigated whatever information he supplied. In the long weeks between Viviana's disappearance and the day he was called to the morgue to identify the body, Rayas had dozens of people interrogated or detained on the basis of anonymous tips.

Not one of the leads panned out. Rayas invited the members of Justicia Para Nuestras Hijas, or Justice for Our Daughters—a small women's group that has aggressively and effectively called attention to the murders in Chihuahua City—to participate in a May Day parade, in which, according to Mexican custom, all labor organizations march past the balcony of the highest local authority, in this case Governor Martínez. For the event, Rayas had five hundred yellow T-shirts emblazoned with Viviana's photograph and the words "Help me find her," and distributed them among the paraders. Governor Martínez, presiding over the march, at one point shouted to Lucha Castro, an activist lawyer and one of the founders of Justicia Para Nuestras Hijas, that she get a real job, and "stop profiteering with the mothers' pain." He did not address Rayas directly, but it may be that the march influenced his decision, on a weekly radio broadcast, to refer to members of Rayas's union who had left loose gravel on a highway as "assassins." The remark was widely reported.

Perhaps, too, the radio incident had something to do with the vehemence of Rayas's growing conviction that the government was sabotaging his efforts to find his daughter. By the time of the May Day parade, both Rayas and his wife, who works in the cafeteria of the public high school where Viviana was enrolled, were frantic. An anonymous caller who spoke "as if he were talking through a voice distorter" told Rayas that if his wife would consent to dress as a prostitute and walk around the red-light district he would see to it that their daughter was released. Twice, Columba complied. Another caller said that on the evening of March 16th her eleven- and twelve-year-old sons had seen a young girl they subsequently recognized from press photographs as Viviana sitting in a pickup truck, apparently fighting with a young man. The girl was crying, and looked as if she wanted to get out of the truck. Rayas notified the police; later, they told him that nothing had come of the lead.

One evening in late March, an unusually savvy informant, who announced that she was calling from a phone booth in order to avoid the caller I.D. on Rayas's phone, told him that he should check out a store in the downtown area: the owners were a strange, long-haired couple covered with tattoos who sold hippie jewelry. Their store stayed open until all hours, and perverted things seemed to be going on there; one of the owners, Ulises Perzábal, liked to take photographs of the young girls who went to the shop, the caller said. Rayas contacted the police.

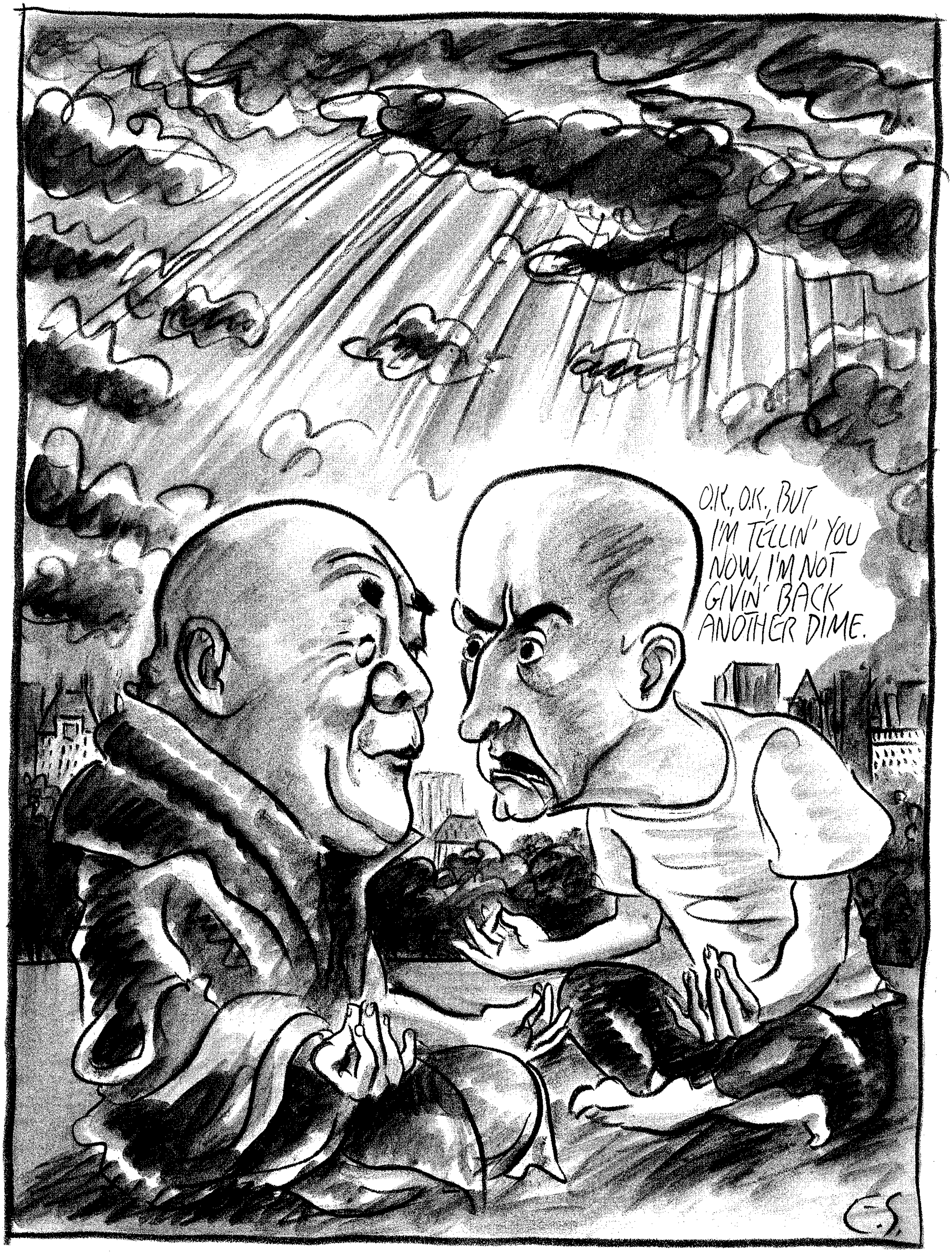
Like Sharif, the major suspect in the Juárez murders, who has dark skin and peaked eyebrows, Ulises Perzábal, with his long hair and jewelry and tattoos and scraggly beard, looks the part. Like Sharif, Perzábal, who is forty-five, could be difficult: ordinarily a peaceful and sociable man who waved to his neighbors and chatted with whoever dropped by the store (in contrast to Cynthia, who is always described as a quiet presence behind the counter), he had moods. When I talked to him briefly at the Chihuahua state prison, he was sweetly cheerful and then suddenly hyper and conspiratorial. "This isn't about a murder," he said. "It's an attack on our politics. We're in the eye of the eagle, man! In the eye of the eagle!" He irritated Chihuahuenses with his endless harangues and fixations and exhortations. He was obsessed with a return to a noble Aztec past and lectured his hapless audiences on the need to improve their brains by eating more beans—or so his listeners recall. He sang rather tuneless protest songs, accompanying himself on a guitar, and had been a fixture of the small, sporadic radical demonstrations held around town. Eventually, he was no longer invited, because he tended to drive audiences away.

Perhaps none of this was important when the police weighed whether to question him or not. What really counted was the fact that, like Sharif, he had been arrested in the past for a sexual offense. In 2001, at a time when Cynthia was travelling, he had had a brief affair with a minor, and her family filed suit. ("He probably thought he was the rock star and she was his groupie," someone who knows him well said.) The family dropped all charges two months later, but the record stayed (and Cynthia moved out for a time). After Viviana Rayas's father received the anonymous phone call and reported him to the police, Ulises Perzábal was detained on four occasions, beaten, and interrogated by *judiciales* regarding the murder of Viviana and the other disappeared girls from Chihuahua. After the fourth detention, Perzábal sought out Miguel Zapién de la Torre, the lawyer who had represented him when he was arrested in 2001. Zapién and his law partner, Adrián Alzate, filed for an order of protection from police harassment, and the cops left Perzábal alone for several weeks.

There were fewer leads for José Rayas to follow after the *judiciales* appeared to turn their attention away from Ulises Perzábal. The Rayas family remained convinced that Viviana had been abducted, and not simply run away. She went home after school with her mother every day. She loved to write, and her grades were good—she had recently got the equivalent of an A-plus on one of her poems. She had "little friends," who, according to her father, were allowed to court her only in the safety of the Rayas home. Her father had seen a large pink cross that Lucha Castro and other activists erected two years ago in front of Governor Martínez's office. There was a nail embedded in it for each of the Juárez and Chihuahua victims. On May 26th, at the climax of yet another demonstration, José Rayas addressed the Governor's controversial attorney general directly.

Initially, Rayas had intended simply to marshal his union brethren and some of the women activists for one more walk to the Governor's office, he says. But as they prepared to set out he and his friends looked around and asked each other, "Which way should we go?"

EDWARD SOREL



O.K., O.K., BUT I'M TELLIN' YOU NOW, I'M NOT GIVIN' BACK ANOTHER DIME.
E.S.

**RUMOR OF THE WEEK** *The board of the New York Stock Exchange has arranged for Richard A. Grasso, its former chairman, to receive, as part of his severance package, spiritual instruction from His Holiness the Dalai Lama.*

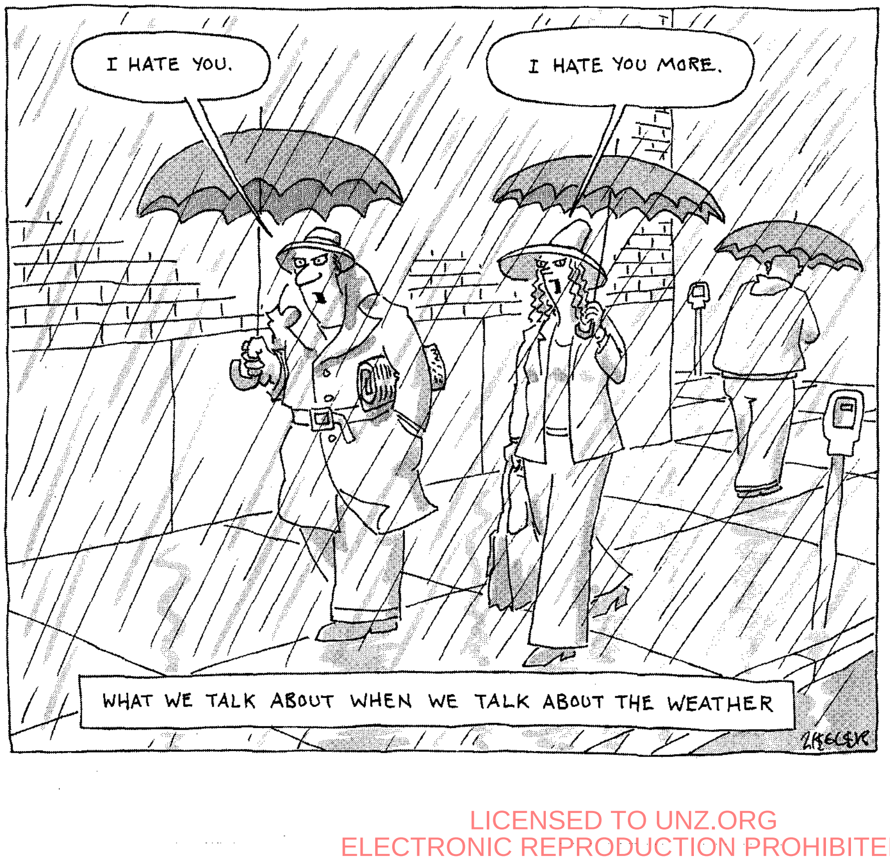
They decided to take a longer, less direct route that took in a busy downtown street where fruits and vegetables are sold. On the way, bystanders joined the procession, and by the time the marchers had passed the fruit and vegetable stalls and returned, nearly a hundred women—shoppers and venders both—were walking behind them. Rayas and his fellows led the demonstration to Attorney General Solís's offices and there called a halt. Rayas knew the controversial Solís well enough to call him by his nickname. "Chito!" he yelled over a megaphone. "Give me back my daughter! I know you know where she is!"

In the union's headquarters recently, Rayas explained to me what he had meant by this statement. "I am the head of my family, and I know where my children are at all times," he said. "As attorney general, Solís has the obligation to know what is going on in the state of Chihuahua." But those who heard him at the time interpreted the challenge differently: Rayas's listeners seem to have felt that he was in some way accusing Solís of playing a role in the murders.

Beneath Solís's window, Rayas issued an ultimatum: either his daughter was found, and those responsible for her fate were arrested, or he would see to it that all the road workers in the state walked off the job, including the toll-booth operators, who collect a significant portion of Chihuahua's highway income. Two days later, around noon, the head of the Attorney General's Special Office for the Investigation of Sex Crimes and Crimes Against the Family, a woman named Rocío Sáenz, phoned Rayas at work and told him that two women who were on their way to a local pilgrimage site had spotted a body some five kilometres off a desert highway and called the police. Sáenz asked Rayas to come to the morgue to identify it. The following evening, Cynthia Kiecker and Ulises Perzábal were taken to the former police academy for two days of intense interrogation. Then they were formally charged with the murder and shown to the press.

Through the glass separation wall of the visiting room in the Chihuahua women's prison center, Cynthia Kiecker, who is forty-four, doesn't look like a hippie kid anymore. Her skin has been raked by the sun, her mouth drawn thin by tension. But there is still an emotional haziness about her—and a lack of anger—that could have been the product of traumatic reaction but seemed to me more likely the result of a generally dreamy and benevolent view of the world. Often in our conversations, I felt like shouting, "Listen up! Focus! Don't you realize you're in terrible trouble?" But I could imagine that in a different situation—as she offered a slice of home-baked banana bread to a visitor to the shop, say, or gazed at her husband while he sang and played the guitar—there would be a graceful charm in the seemingly willful vagueness.

Why, if she was now insisting that she and Ulises were innocent, had she confessed to murder? "I held out as long as possible, but I didn't know how far they would go with my husband," she said. "The only thing I was sure of is that I wouldn't make it out of there alive." During the forty-eight hours that the couple's de-facto abduction lasted, they had been kicked and beaten repeatedly, she said. Every once in a while, someone would throw a bucket of water over Cynthia's shirt, and then apply electric shocks to her back and legs. The one concession her guards had made in those two days was to remove the plastic hood so that she could breathe more easily. Eventually, she told me, several of the couple's friends and acquaintances were brought in, and they were tortured, too. Ulises was held separately. At the end of the second day, Cynthia was taken to see Ulises. He was naked and badly beaten, she said. Electric shocks had been applied to his back and genitals repeatedly throughout those forty-eight hours. "And they had tried to stretch me out on a cot," Cynthia told me, "and they threatened to rape me, and they said, 'We're going to shove this stick up your ass' and"—her voice trailed off—"oh . . . all that stuff. And then I saw Ulises"—here for the first time her voice quavered—"and he said to sign, just go along with the story, and it sounded to me like the best solution."


I HATE YOU.
I HATE YOU MORE.
WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER
ZIEGLER

Cynthia testified that on Sunday, March 16th, around 5:30 P.M., after closing down the store, she and Ulises headed home to get ready for a party at which they would listen to rock music and drink tea that she likes to make from peyote. (Cynthia said that the confession was videotaped while several *judiciales* and Sáenz observed the proceedings out of camera range.) She said that on the way home the couple ran into Viviana Rayas, a young girl who had at some point bought rings or bracelets at the store, and that Ulises invited her to the party. Cynthia then testified that after drinking the peyote tea she became jealous of Ulises and Viviana and quarrelled with her husband; that Viviana became sick from the effects of the tea and fell, injuring herself, that Ulises "*andaba bien loco*"—was acting pretty crazy—and that sometime after 9 P.M. he grabbed the short iron rod that jewelers use to size rings and struck Viviana once on the back of the head.

In Ulises's confession, which differs from Cynthia's in some critical respects, he narrates at length how he had befriended Viviana long before the night of the murder and how he had decided to prepare a special "ritual" for her, inspired by her "Aztec features." At the party that evening, during which the "energizing ritual" would take place, and at which abundant quantities of cocaine and marijuana were consumed, *he* prepared the peyote tea. Viviana became ill, Ulises became solicitous, and Cynthia became jealous and, in an uncontrollable rage, attacked first Viviana and then Ulises with a baseball bat, then with a rebar, and finally with the ring sizer. At some point, Cynthia let up on Ulises, but then Ulises, "pursued by rage and confusion," was moved to strike Viviana himself. (The initial forensic report on Viviana's body lists the cause of death not as a blow to the head but as "crushed vertebrae due to violent strangulation," which is consistent with many of the previous feminicides.) Realizing that Viviana was dead, the statement goes on, Ulises, his wife, and three friends took the body out to the desert, dumped it, and covered it with a sheet of metal roofing. And then Cynthia and Ulises drove their accomplices home.

Whether the authorities who took down the statements were troubled by any of the striking discrepancies between the two accounts—however they may have been obtained in the first place—is not known. The friends who had been hauled in as witnesses signed approximately similar versions of the events at the Perzábal home on the evening of March 16th, and then were released.

Cynthia and Ulises were transferred to the state prison, just outside Chihuahua City, where their arrest was announced to the media. Cynthia says it was a huge relief to be in jail: "I felt safe: I was somewhere where the *judiciales* couldn't come and get me. Only prison guards are allowed in here." A few days later, having seen the stories about the *narcosatánica* Cynthia Kiecker in the local press, the United States consul stationed in Juárez came to visit. His assistant lent Kiecker a cell phone, and Kiecker called her family.

Gahan Wilson

*"So who did you beget?"*

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In Chihuahua City, I talked to Manuel López, one of four acquaintances of the Perzábals who testified against them. López makes his living sketching pencil portraits of passersby on the streets of downtown Chihuahua, and was not really a friend of the couple, but they had been kind to him, agreeing to show some of his work on consignment at the store. Once, when he couldn't pay the rent in the transient hotel where he was living, they took him in for a couple of weeks. López has astonishingly light-colored blue-green eyes and a haunted, even terrified expression. How prosecutors found him is a mystery, but he says that he was taken to the former police academy the same night as the Perzábals and beaten for hours. He signed a witness statement and got out of town, but when the Perzábals' lawyers, Zapién and Alzate, found him, he agreed to retract his statement at the trial. López feared for his life, he told me, and to judge by his startled movements and trembling hands he was not exaggerating. He has no family, no fixed address; who would care if he was discreetly disposed of?

Still, he was willing to recant. After Zapién and Alzate brought him back to Chihuahua, and after the trial judge refused to set a date to hear López's retraction, the lawyers called a press conference at which López and another acquaintance of the Perzábals both spoke. "I used to see Cynthia and Ulises in the news every day after I denounced them, and I would cry," López told me. "When I came back and talked to the press, I felt at peace again." Immediately after the press conference, a white helicopter began hovering over the two lawyers' downtown offices. Six other partners at the firm quickly moved out, and Zapién and Alzate had to vacate the premises, at their landlord's request. They decided to send López into hiding.

The press conference at which López spoke seems to have marked a turning point for José Rayas. The more carefully he looked at the state's case against the Perzábals, the more he began to wonder if the real killers were still at large. Rayas has wielded power and dealt with the

Crush the bastards!
Sue the bastards!
Buy the bastards!
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MULTIMEDIA-CONGLOMERATE-TASKING
Shanahan

state for many years, but when I talked to him he seemed curiously innocent and forlorn, as if during the preceding weeks he had been robbed not only of his daughter but of all certainty. His doubts now extend even to the identification of his daughter's body; among the many large issues facing the officials dealing with the Chihuahua feminicides, perhaps none is more confounding than the question of why they have, on several occasions, turned over to a grieving family what appears to have been the wrong body. In the case of the two bus drivers accused of murdering eight young girls in 2001, DNA tests did not match samples taken from the relatives of five of the girls the suspects had named. Two tests were inconclusive, and only one body tested positive, according to Oscar Maynez, who was then the head of the Juárez forensic department. Maynez told me that he had refused to plant some of the bus drivers' hair as evidence, and that he simultaneously resigned and was fired a few weeks later.

In another instance, the mother of a seventeen-year-old Juárez victim named Sagrario González demanded that a DNA test be performed in Mexico City on the body that the police had delivered as her daughter's, and the results revealed that the dead girl was no relation. When the mother insisted on an exhumation of the girl's remains, police managed to dig up the wrong coffin. In the case in which Sharif was convicted, the family of Elisabeth Castro received a corpse, dressed in Elisabeth's clothing, that was approximately five feet four inches tall; Elisabeth was five feet seven. More recently, in Chihuahua City, Patricia Cervantes, the mother of Neyra Azucena Cervantes, refused to accept the body offered to her by the prosecuting attorney's office, and continues to claim her daughter as missing.

At the morgue in Chihuahua City, *judiciales* and Sáenz showed Rayas and his two older daughters a number of garments displayed in a long glass case. Rayas didn't recognize many, but a blouse, a brassiere, and a short jacket were undoubtedly his daughter's. Sáenz showed him photographs of a corpse, swollen and bruised from the waist down, a skeleton from the waist up. Did he recognize Viviana? he was asked. Rayas fumbled for words. A dentist was brought in, and she told Rayas—as she told the press shortly afterward—that she had filled two of Viviana's molars back in October, and that she recognized the teeth. Would you like to see the body? Rayas was asked, and was told that he could spare himself a great deal of pain if he identified his daughter from the photographs alone. Rayas decided that he would rather remember Viviana as she had been in life. He signed the identification warrant and authorized the burial.

For weeks, Miguel Zapién pleaded with the Rayas family to authorize an exhumation of the body. Viviana's mother was so horrified by the request that she stood guard over the grave. And yet José Rayas's doubts have grown: a bloodstain on the Perzábals' wall turned out to be maroon-colored vinyl paint; according to dates that appear in court records, police notified a ranch owner that a body had been found on his property the day *before* the two women stumbled onto it and called the police. In the original press story reporting the discovery of a corpse, a spokesman for the *judiciales* denied that it could be any of the missing girls; it belonged to an older woman, he said. Two days after the Perzábals' arrest, Rayas had taken a video camera out to the area where Viviana was supposedly found, and filmed Ulises Perzábal as he demonstrated to some *judiciales* how he had dumped the victim's body. In the video Rayas showed me, Perzábal is limping badly, and when the *judiciales* realize that they are being filmed they form a shield around him. In July, Perzábal phoned Rayas from jail to tell him that he was innocent. On August 5th, Rayas agreed at last to meet with Zapién and with Cynthia's mother, Carol Kiecker, who, with her former husband, Burton, and other family members, takes turns travelling to Chihuahua to visit Cynthia in jail.

The Perzábals' prosecutors may have found it surprising that a middle-aged hippie turned out to have such loving and protective parents. The Kieckers come from Bloomington, Minnesota—Carol is a retired vice-president of a major West Coast H.M.O., Burton is in real estate—and José Rayas, too, may have been inclined to see Cynthia and Ulises Perzábal in a more favorable light after talking to them.

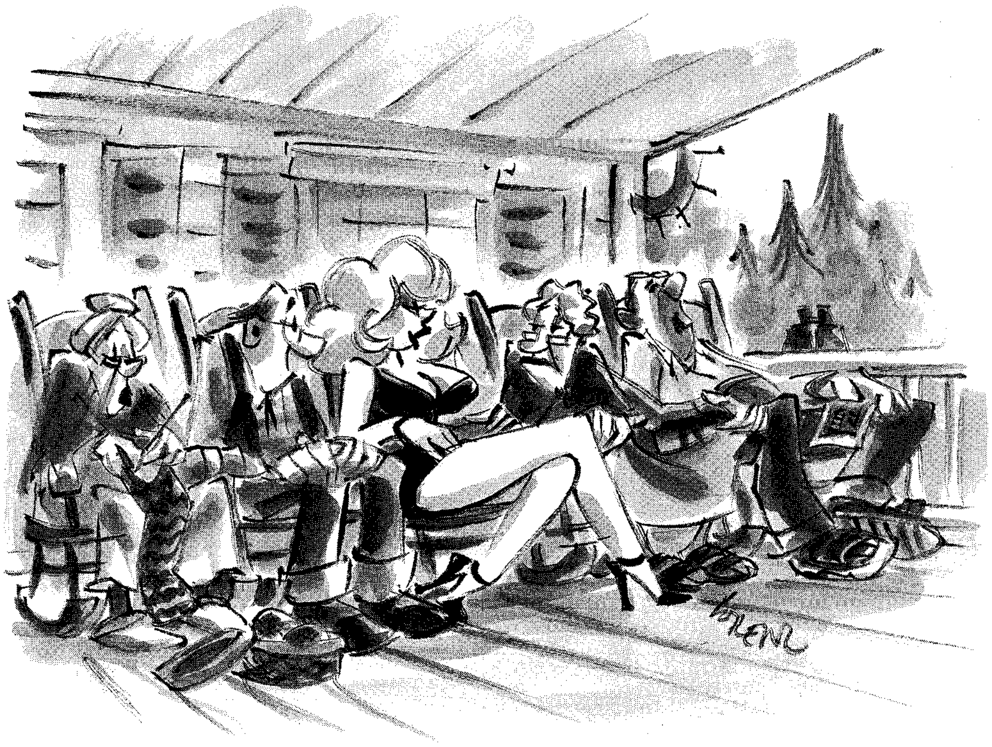
Carol Kiecker has a lively gaze, a face that, like her body, is comfortably rounded at the edges, and a fast, purposeful stride. She is sixty-eight, and anything but unfocussed. When she retired, a few years ago, she took up backpacking, and since then has travelled in Ghana, Togo, and Benin, and along the Silk Road in China. Before her amicable divorce from Burton, in 1983, the couple and their three children vacationed in Mexico many times, and she can speak a little Spanish.

Carol Kiecker appears to have thought that the drug-murder-by-bludgeoning episode involving her daughter would soon be declared a mistake by the Mexican justice system—President Fox had already heard about Cynthia's travails from a few Minnesota congressmen and both senators, thanks to the family's efforts—and that Cynthia and Ulises would then be released. But Carol now stays in a budget hotel in Chihuahua and eats her meals at modest restaurants, because she has begun to see that the trial may turn out differently, or at least take much longer than she ever feared. The full impact of Cynthia's situation seems to have descended on Carol the day that her daughter and Ulises were scheduled to testify for the first time. By then, Carol had learned enough about the Mexican legal system to know that there is no such thing as a jury trial, that the court session would take place in private, before a presiding judge and a transcriber, and that the proceedings might take a long time (though not, it must be said, by the standards of the woefully laggard Mexican justice system, in which prisoners can wait in jail for years for their first trial date). Testimony in the Perzábal trial was scheduled to begin on Friday, August 8th, with Cynthia's interrogation to be followed by Ulises's. Manuel López and a friend of the Perzábals who had also been detained with them were scheduled to retract their confessions the following day. Carol expected to be given access to the sessions; she was not aware that third parties—especially the press—might not be allowed in. There were only a few reporters there in any event: a British television crew, an A.P. reporter from the Mexico City bureau, and me. There were no local press people except for a couple of eager kids from a tiny radical periodical.

A few minutes after the hearing was supposed to begin, Zapién was called into the office of Judge Bernardino Medina. Zapién, who is thirty-four, is reserved and polite in an old-fashioned, provincial sort of way, and, in the perishing Chihuahua heat, wears blue suits and immaculate white shirts without breaking a sweat. He is personable but not quite handsome, and he could probably be convincing before a trial jury, I thought, were there ever to be such a thing in Mexico. But when he emerged from the Judge's chambers half an hour later he was furious. He said that the Judge had rescheduled the session for the following Monday, perhaps mindful that by then the journalists who had flown into town to cover the trial would be gone.

Carol Kiecker was unusually quiet, suddenly looking older and struggling to regain the chirpy poise that in previous days had allowed her to take on with aplomb foreign laws and lawyers, hundred-degree-plus temperatures, and press interrogations. But when the trial resumed, under a different judge, a few days later (Zapién had demanded and, astonishingly, obtained a change of venue), Carol was back on form. She and Zapién had met with José Rayas, and he had agreed to consider the family's request that he appear as a witness for the defense at the trial.

The witnesses were permitted to retract their confessions on August 15th, and on August 25th Rayas appeared before the court. He stated that he did not believe the Perzábals had murdered his daughter, and he said that he and his wife had agreed to authorize an exhumation of the corpse so that a DNA sample could be taken. Even if the body Rayas and his wife buried does turn out to be Viviana's, the family's pain will never find relief. Like dozens of other families who have lost a daughter during the last ten years in the state of Chihuahua, they may never believe that justice has been done, that the government has thoroughly prosecuted the crime of their disappeared child and arrested the murderer. José Rayas may never find out what happened to his daughter when he dropped her off at the park that afternoon—and, indeed, it may be better for him if he never does. As for Cynthia and Ulises Perzábal, long months and numerous judicial procedures lie ahead of them before they are sentenced or acquitted by the presiding judge. Meanwhile, on September 7th the body of another girl was found on the outskirts of Chihuahua City. ♦


"It cost a bundle, but I can't tell you how much better I feel about myself."

FICTION

# ANDROGYNOUS

### BY ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

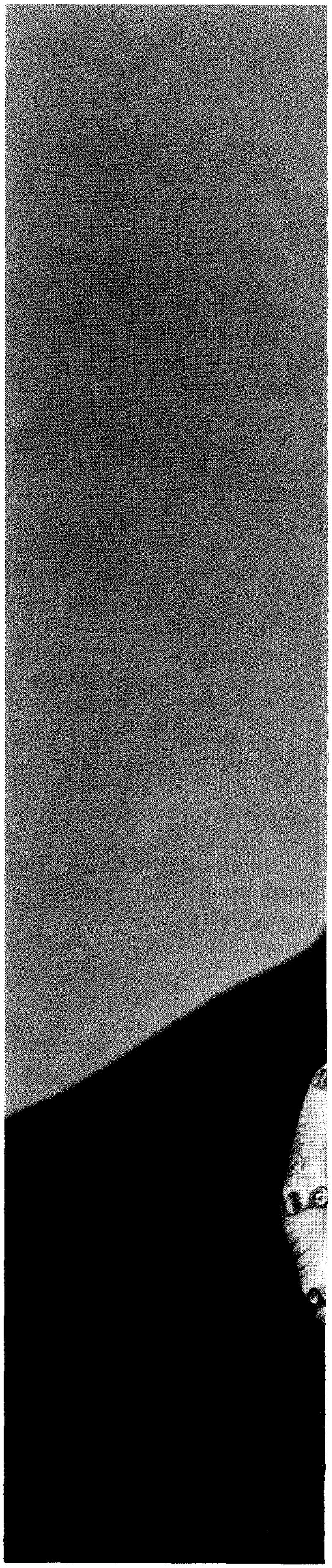
In the study house in the Polish village of Pilev, Hasidim sat around swapping Hasidic anecdotes. Someone mentioned a rebbe who taught that a Jew ought to be prepared at every moment to lay down his life for Kiddush Ha-Shem, the Sanctification of the Holy Name. Reb Leyzer Walden, an old Kotsker Hasid, took hold of his beard, which had already gone white but had later turned yellow again—no doubt from his puffing away all day at his pipe and taking snuff—and muttered, "So?"

When Reb Leyzer said "So?" it was not just a mannerism, a grunt, a snort. It was well known in the Pilever study house that Reb Leyzer was sparing of words. When he gestured with a hand, shrugged a shoulder, or merely raised an eyebrow, the young people around him had to guess at his meaning. Usually they were afraid to ask. In his old age, Reb Leyzer had grown persnickety. He didn't think much of modern Hasidism, or of the "grandchildren," as he called the small-time rebbes, or of the rebbes' fawning over the rich, or the written notes they received asking for advice, and the payments that accompanied them. He enjoyed being irritating. On Purim, when the whole congregation was seated for the festive meal and everyone had begun passing around the challah and drinking the wine by the light of thick candles, Reb Leyzer Walden was quite capable of settling down to study the civil laws in the fourth part of the Shulchan Aruch, complete with notes and additions—for no purpose other than to rile the good-time Jews, the overpious and the weak-kneed. It was said that on Tishah-b'Ab he used to smear cheese on his mustache so that the anti-Hasidic rationalists would think he was eating on a day of fasting. He deliberately dressed in the fashion of bygone times: a hat with a high crown, a caftan to his ankles, knee breeches, slippers, and white stockings. He said his morning prayers at sunset and delayed his afternoon and evening prayers until late at night. People were aware that he knew the Talmud by heart and that Reb Abraham Sokhatshever had written asking for his opinion on questions of rabbinical law. Well and good; but why should he say "So?" about a pious Jew who believed in laying down his life? The Hasidim looked at one another in astonishment.

Among those in the Pilever study house was a young man familiarly known as Shloymele Mischief. The son of a rich man, the son-in-law of a man even richer, and a genius in the bargain, this Shloymele had a reputation for being an impudent fellow. Perhaps he wanted to prove how smart he was, for he asked, "Reb Leyzer, what do you mean by 'So'? Do you regard self-sacrifice as a matter of no importance?"

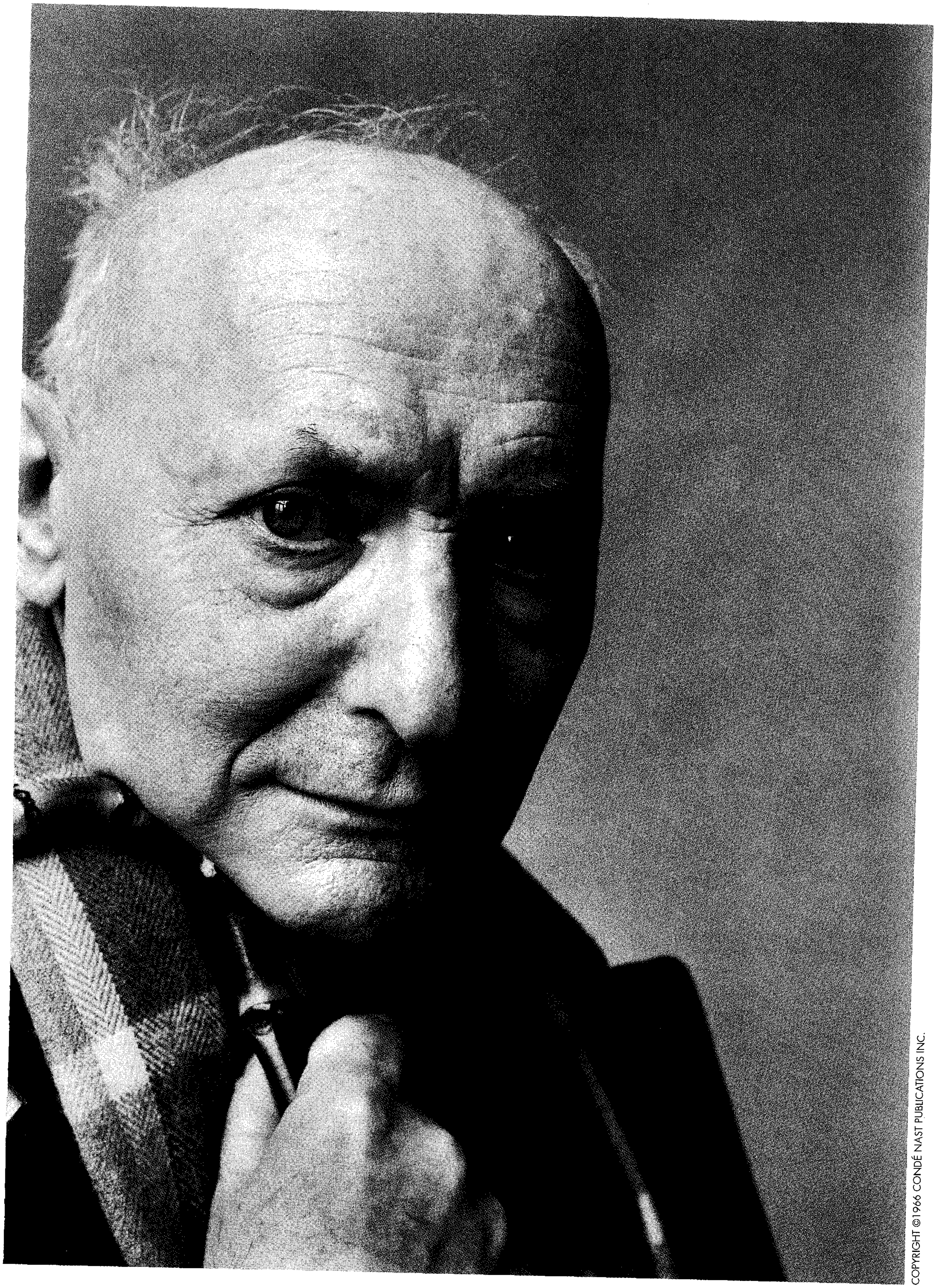
Reb Leyzer cast a withering glance at him. The others were shocked. Reb Leyzer Walden was entirely capable of slapping someone or even of throwing a cheeky youth over a bench and thrashing him. For a long time he sat staring quietly into the distance, as if he could see things on the other side of the wall. Eventually, he said, "You're an insolent whippersnapper, and you deserve to be taken down a good few pegs, but one is obliged to provide a justification for a question regarding faith. Draw a little closer, small fry—I've no strength to shout."

All drew closer, mouths shut and ears open. Reb Leyzer took out his handkerchief and tobacco tin and laid them on the table. He shook some coarse-cut into his pipe and lit up. After a pause, he said, "Certainly self-sacrifice is a matter of



PHOTOGRAPH BY IRVING PENN

*Isaac Bashevis Singer in New York in 1966.*



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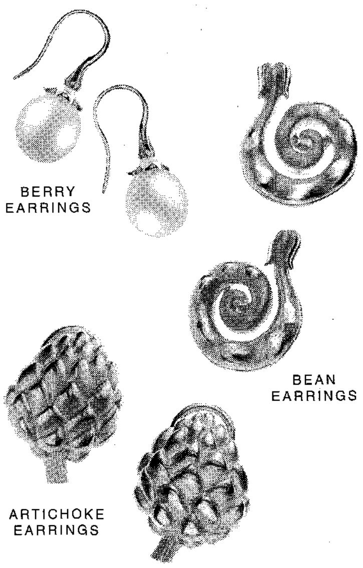

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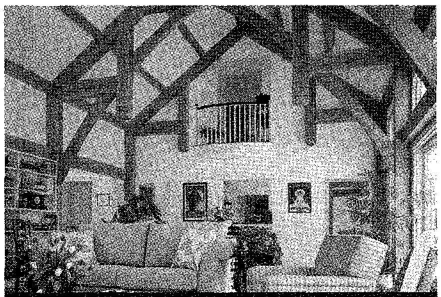

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grave importance, but the manner in which it is performed is not significant. In 1648, at the time of the Chmielnicki massacres, and at other times, whole communities have sacrificed themselves. One dare not say it, but the custom is common even among Gentiles. One general sends a whole camp of soldiers into battle, and they fight to the last drop of blood. Life is not at all as precious to people as we imagine. The greatest strength in the service of God is rejoicing in His commandments. The truly righteous man needs no reward. He would be quite willing to forgo, if it were possible, Leviathan and the Wild Ox, the Holy Wine, even the Resurrection from the dead. He who knows the true taste of being a Jew doesn't need to be encouraged with a pinch on the cheek.

"In Shebreshin at one time there was a heretic, Yekel Rayfman, an atheist, who used to wear a rabbinical fur hat and spend his days and nights absorbed in Torah study. It was said that on the Sabbath he would read over the portion of the week while smoking a cigar. I can't say—I wasn't standing next to him. His followers among the secularists came and asked him, 'Is this possible? What can you be thinking of?' And he answered, 'What's the reward of eating dumplings? The Torah,' he said, 'is dumplings, and the Targum is chicken soup, and Rashi is compote. Two pins for the World to Come,' he said. 'For me, Jewishness is of this world.'

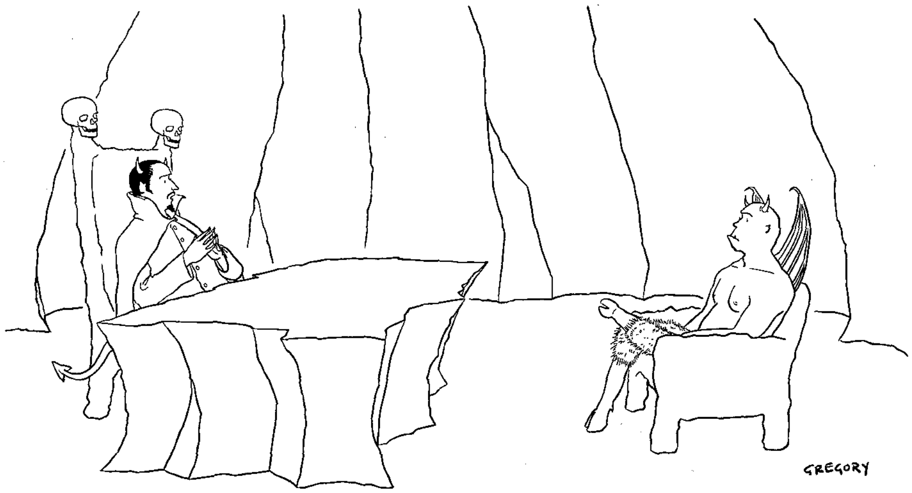
"Yekel Rayfman had a devout wife, and she travelled out to seek advice from Reb Sholem Belzer as to whether or not she should divorce her husband. Reb Sholem listened patiently to her wifely complaints, and apparently he replied in only two words: 'Divorce? Pity.'

"So she stayed and had good children by her husband. One son, Reb Nathan, as I remember, later became a rabbi.

"But Yekel Rayfman is another matter. I really want to tell you about Reb Mottele Partsever. Who knows about Reb Mottele Partsever today? Even in his younger years he never had much of a following. In his old age, he had only a handful of Hasidim left, including those who lived with him. Reb Mottele used to say that he had prayed on the mezuzah that no followers would travel out to visit him. 'Six hundred thousand,' he used to say, 'journeyed out of Egypt, and as a result they made the golden calf and longed for the fleshpots. Why is unity the chief principle of Judaism? Because one is enough. The Gentiles believe in three, and three is nothing.'

"This Reb Mottele picked an ongoing quarrel with the Master of the Universe. He used to complain to Him: 'Just because You're great and I'm a speck of dust, do I have to keep creeping under Your nails? You didn't make Yourself great, and I didn't make myself a speck of dust. Given the fact that You're unique, what's the great achievement? To an Almighty Being, nothing's a surprise.' He said such radical things that conventional Jews fled to the other ends of the earth. In Partsev, there was no shortage of anti-Hasidic rationalists, and this crowd raised an outcry that Reb Mottele was blaspheming. They also smashed his windows. He had only one attendant, Reb Alter, who was an old drunkard. When Reb Alter took a drink, he'd curse God and all His works in the foulest language. In Partsev, worship and rebellion went hand in hand. Reb Mottele used to say, 'An apostate out of spite is a righteous man with an appetite.' As long as he knows who his Master is, it does no harm for him to be a rebel. What was Job? What was Korah? Why did Moses break the tablets? Commonplace Jews don't pray—they only flatter; and it's quite likely that God despises flattery. In Partsev, they placed the emphasis on forsaking God while keeping His commandments. The Torah is for this world, and Paradise doesn't come to this world.

"Reb Mottele didn't believe in sleeping. Even in his youth he hadn't undressed at night. His wife passed away a year after their marriage. Reb Mottele didn't need a replacement. Piety and property don't go together. His intimates said that at night he did little more than doze fitfully. Since Jewishness is of this world, why sleep it away? In Partsev, every day was Simchas Torah. They danced in the morning and they danced at night. They danced on Yom Kippur, and it's more than likely that even on Tishah-b'Ab they didn't hesitate to dance a little dance. 'Torah is rejoicing, and rejoicing is Torah,' Reb Mottele said. Other rebbes each had their special liturgical melody, but tunes came down to Partsev straight from the music of the heavens themselves, and every man devised his own tune, both for prayer and



*"I need someone well versed in the art of torture—do you know PowerPoint?"*

for study. In Partsev, no one sent written requests for the rebbe's guidance, and payment for advice given was strongly discouraged. Reb Mottele literally didn't know what a coin looked like. His house was falling to pieces; the roof leaked. When it rained, water poured into the synagogue. The stove in the ritual bathhouse broke down, and the bath was unheated even in winter. In any case, there was nothing to heat it with. Well, who paid attention to such trivialities anyway? Reb Alter, the shammes, was descended from a brewer, and he could distill brandy—from barley, from potatoes, from apples. The rebbe had an orchard that yielded apples as hard as wood from which Reb Alter concocted a liquor, the secret of which no one could discover. Even though Reb Alter had never been seen opening a holy book, he was an outstanding scholar. An ignoramus had no place in Partsev.

"When Reb Mottele became aware that he had no followers with whom to sit down to meals, he locked himself away and became a recluse. But in Partsev they believed that it wasn't necessary to meet at table, and the Partsever rebbe never organized communal eating anyway. Even during the High Holy Days, no more than twenty or thirty people ever went to his court. They ate either in the middle of the night or just before dawn, or they forgot about eating altogether. In Partsev, everything was inside out and upside down. A young joker who lived there used to say, 'In Partsev, we pray so late that it turns out to be early.' Quips were very popular in Partsev, and they believed that Heaven enjoyed these quips as well. 'He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh. . . .'"

"When the rebbe's wife died, he was still a young man—barely twenty, as I recall. His intimates busied themselves with matchmaking, but Reb Mottele wouldn't hear of it. Mating, he used to say, is contempt of the Torah. The Litvaks have recluses, but their hermits are steeped in melancholy. They live in terror of Gehenna. In Partsev, they scoffed at Gehenna. 'If they want to be whipped in the World to Come,' Reb Mottele would say, 'let them be whipped. It's their backsides, not mine.' Once a Hasid came to him for advice on how to become God-fearing, and Reb Mottele answered, 'One doesn't need to fear God. What's there to be scared of? Jewishness is coziness, not terror. Let the angels quiver and quake. They have no option.'

"In the early years, before people knew what Partsev was like, Hasidim still came to synagogue to commemorate certain days—one's wife was sick, another's child had died, the squire didn't want to extend the lease on someone else's land. These Jews wanted the rebbe to pray for them. But Reb Mottele gave them such contrary responses that they hurried away, bitterly disappointed.

"Reb Mottele was in his sixties. In earlier years, people had still spoken of him, Hasidim and Misnaggedim alike. Other pietists had slandered him. Later, they stopped doing even this. The world forgot that there was such a place as Partsev, and Partsev forgot that there was such a thing as the world. No women were ever admitted into the court. What business did a woman have in Partsev? The rebbe had never wished for the sight of women. Female is flesh, and flesh is slavery.

"Now hear a story. Not far from Partsev was a little village called Laptsev. It wasn't even a village; it was just a settlement that belonged to a lunatic squire, where a handful of Jews had established themselves. When the squire dropped dead, the settlement was taken over by a relative of his, a libertine who spent all his time in Paris. He left everything in the hands of a tenant, Reb Yossele Tsivkever, who ruled the estate as the undisputed king. He did exactly as he pleased, and twice a year he sent money to Paris, where the sot drank it all away. So the years passed. Reb Yossele was an honest man; he kept scrupulous accounts and didn't treat the peasants unjustly. He wasn't a Hasid himself, just an ordinary householder, but from time to time he sent to the court in Partsev a wagonload of corn, barley, and potatoes from which Reb Alter fermented his liquor. On Pesach, he provided the court with special flour from which to bake matzos. Reb Mottele truly didn't know there was such a person as Reb Yossele. Of what concern to him were the doings of the world?

"This Reb Yossele had five daughters and only one son, Leybele, who was a highly determined merchant. He often travelled to fairs in Lublin, in Danzig, in Leipzig. He leased land from other squires. He became so skilled that his father turned over to him all his business affairs and occupied himself instead with studying the Talmud and observing the precepts of the law. Great matches were proposed to Leybele, but he was in no hurry to marry. Then one day he returned from a long trip and brought a bride with him. In those days, and, what's more, in such a tiny place as Laptsev, for a young man to arrive with a bride-to-be and to announce that this was his choice without asking his parents' permission was unheard of. But when a young man has already made himself very rich, and deals with the most influential businessmen, he is his own master. The bride-to-be was called Shevach—an unusual name—and she was an orphan, utterly alone in

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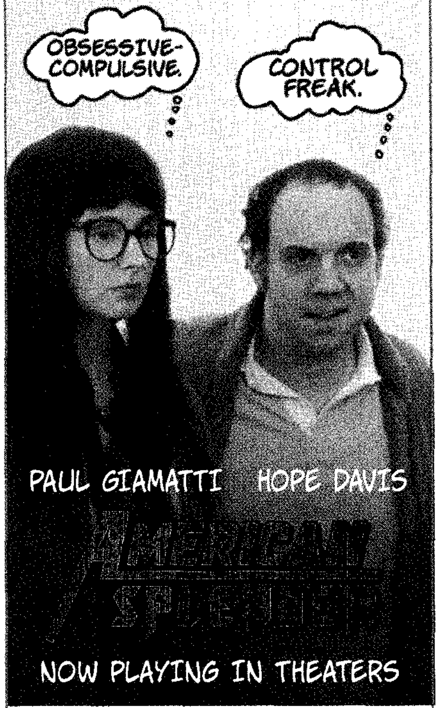

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the world. He'd met her somewhere in a big city—Lublin, I think, or even Warsaw. His parents asked, 'Who was the matchmaker?,' and Leybele answered, 'There wasn't a matchmaker. We met at an inn and chatted.' You know yourselves how the worldly folk of today conduct themselves. All of Laptsev went to stare at the bride-to-be—she was no beauty, but everyone could see that she was clever, sophisticated, spoke nineteen to the dozen, and peppered her speech with Hebrew expressions. Not only were there no in-laws—the prospective bride also had no dowry. What was the sense in waiting? The betrothal contract was quickly drawn up, and, in celebration, plates were broken in the traditional way. Someone took this Shevach in as a house guest to prepare her for the wedding. She had no clothes, either—just a dress, a bit of linen, and some trifles. A trousseau was quickly put together and the wedding date was fixed. Those with whom the bride was boarding related that she read holy booklets. The woman of the house tried to teach her to cook, sew, and darn, and instructed her in the duties of female purity, but Shevach poked fun at her. According to custom, girls came to inspect and to question her before her marriage, but Shevach answered them at cross-purposes and they went away embarrassed.

"Leybele himself wasn't much of a student, but a teacher was hired to coach him for the Talmudic discourse that the groom traditionally delivers after the golden soup has been served. A wedding feast was prepared, the canopy was set up, and everything was as it should be. But when it came to the discourse Leybele forgot the words and muddled everything up. People glanced at him. The bride, now his wife, nudged his elbow and reminded him of what he had to say. Shevach knew the discourse better than he did. No one had ever come across such a thing before, not even in the biggest cities, let alone in such a dump as Laptsev. Everyone stared, openmouthed. Leybele became so confused that he couldn't remember anything, so Shevach delivered the entire discourse from beginning to end and even added an original bit of her own. A wedding jester was in attendance, a certain Reb Zelmele, who had been brought down specially from Janov, and in performing his function he mocked every detail of the affair. A great many wedding gifts had been presented; Reb Yossele had given his son a complete set of the Talmud, and the wedding jester, already a bit tipsy, gibed that if the volumes were of no use to the bridegroom they would certainly come in handy for the bride, a remark that was received with an uproar of hilarity and ridicule. I know about it because my late father attended the wedding. He used to buy wheat from Reb Yossele. He was a grain merchant and we had a granary.

"As is the custom, after the virtue dance the wedding attendants escorted first the bride and then the bridegroom to the bedroom. The assembled guests danced and made merry. The free and easy types stationed themselves, as they usually did, at the window of the room in which the bride and groom were secluded after the ceremony, eavesdropping, and trying to peep through the cracks in the shutters. How can one peep into a room that is pitch-dark? But boors remain boors. The traditional practice was that an hour or two after the nuptial couple had been led in to lie together, women from both the bride's side and the groom's side would burst in on the young pair, drag the sheet out from under them, and—if things had taken their natural course and the bride had been a virgin—dance a kosher dance outside with it. I'll make it short: Screaming and shouting could be heard from the bedroom—not the cries of a virgin in pain but quarrelling, yelling, swearing, cursing. The door was flung open and the bride dashed out, with the groom chasing after her. 'What's this?' the guests demanded, and the groom blurted out, 'She's not a woman!' 'What is she, then?' they asked. 'A man?' And he answered, 'Either a eunuch or an androgyne!'

"Laptsev did not lack ruffians. They grabbed Shevach and immediately began to examine her body. Yes, poor Leybele was unfortunately right. This Shevach was an androgyne—half man, half woman, neither one thing nor the other. Only now did everyone notice that she had a masculine voice. It was summer, and from all the houses of the village a mob came running. Even the peasants heard what had happened. That night nobody shut an eye. They asked Shevach, 'How could such a thing be?' And she answered, 'I don't want to be a woman. I'm a man. The whole thing,' she added, 'was a blind buy, and a transaction of that kind can always be put to rights.' They took her to the rabbi, where she was examined again. It quickly became apparent that no bread would rise from this dough. Leybele immediately demanded a divorce. It's not the easiest thing in the world to arrange a divorce from an androgynous bride. But the rabbi of Laptsev was learned enough, he had lots of holy books, and he dug up all the relevant laws. The rabbi's wife shut herself up in a room with Shevach and asked her, 'Why did you fool that bachelor?' Shevach replied, 'I've fooled only myself. I imagined,' she said, 'that if I married it might help, but I see now that I'm lost.'

"Everyone imagined that Shevach would demand money, and she certainly could have pulled a packet out of Leybele. But she didn't say a word about money. She sat next to the mistress of the house, waited for the bill of divorce, and browsed through some holy books. One thing she did ask for: men's clothing. As soon as she could, she put on ritual fringes. She even wanted to put on phylacteries. The rabbi called her in and said, 'You can do as you please, but not here in Laptsev.' He reminded her of the passage in Isaiah regarding eunuchs. In those days, Reb Hanoch Aleksandrover was already a rebbe, and everybody knew that he was a eunuch. You're all aware that Reb Hanoch was not only a saint but a great sage as well. The body is a body and the soul is a soul. The couple were divorced, and Leybele, as a gesture of good will, gave the unfortunate woman a few hundred zlotys. She put together a bundle and went off on foot to Partsev. From Partsev, she would be able to get a covered wagon to Lublin."

Reb Leyzer Walden started knocking the ash out of his pipe and cleaning its stem with a skewer.

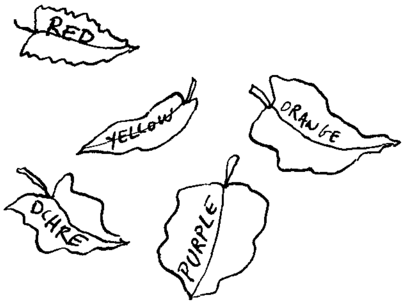
He grunted, "Have patience, whippersnappers. I must have a smoke first."

Reb Leyzer Walden lit his pipe, puffed away, blew smoke directly into the faces of his listeners, and said, "How far is Laptsev from Partsev? Partsev had already heard about the whole thing. But Reb Mottele paid little attention to the goings on in town. First of all, there was nobody to tell him about them. Second, he didn't care about anything. He was concerned only with settling his accounts with the Master of the Universe. The few Hasidim who still followed him came to the court only on the High Holy Days. Of those who lived with him, some were deaf, some were blind, and the rest were senile. Reb Alter was always drunk. There could have been a conflagration in Partsev, but unless the flames reached the court the rebbe wouldn't have known anything about it. Twice a year, during Pesach and after Sukkoth, the river overflowed, but since the water never washed up as far as the rebbe's study house, he went on with his own affairs. To this day, I don't know who told him about Shevach. But someone did, and for the first time in years the rebbe listened attentively and didn't say, 'What difference does it make?' Instead he replied, 'If she comes here, I want to come to an understanding with her.'

"She did arrive, and was immediately confronted with the message. That Reb Mottele should receive a woman was staggeringly incomprehensible. They brought her in, and despite the fact that this might break the law against a man remaining alone with a single woman, Reb Mottele locked himself up in his study with her. Reb Mottele Partsever had never kept anyone with him for longer than fifteen minutes; Shevach, however, was closeted with him for three hours. Everyone thought that she would right away travel back to where she'd come from, but Reb Mottele gave instructions that she should be given a room in the court, and he told the shammes, who was also the cook and the housekeeper—he had a lame old woman who helped him—to provide Shevach with everything she needed.

"Soon the shammes, Reb Alter, died, and Shevach took over his duties. No woman had ever been a rebbe's shammes before, but in what way is an androgyne more a woman than a man? Just as the body possesses both genders, so does the soul. There are such things as twin souls.

"I once looked up the whole matter in the holy books, and it would seem that an androgyne can choose for himself what he wants to be, male or female. If he wants to be female, then he is relieved of performing the daily ritual duties demanded of men. If he takes manhood upon himself, then he takes on the obligation of fulfilling all six hundred and thirteen commandments. I can't remember now whether I found this in the codes of Joseph Caro, or of Maimonides, or simply in a responsum. It appears that not every androgyne is the same. In some, the male qualities are dominant; in others, the female. The kabbalah makes it clear that both male and female attributes are present in every human being. In Hrubishev, there was a woman, Genendele, the wife of Shmuel Eli, who when she was still a girl had started to grow a beard. Because it would have harmed her chances of making a marriage, the rabbi of Hrubishev gave her permission to shave. The Torah's prohibition against shaving does not apply to women. In her old age she stopped shaving, grew a white beard, and didn't cut it. She called it 'my jewelry.' "



"I suppose the rebbe married Shevach," one of the youths called out.

"Do you know, or are you asking?"

"No, I don't know."

"You guessed it, smart-aleck."

"What possible sense could it make?"

"Not everything makes sense. And even if it does you don't need to know it. The nub of the matter was as follows. Shevach began to behave like a man. She put on ritual fringes. It was said that secretly she also put on phylacteries. The shammes had died, and Shevach as good as assumed his duties. Those who lived in the court and ate from the communal pot began to come to life again. Reb Alter, with all due respect, would get drunk and forget to prepare meals. The residents had suffered greatly as a result, getting by on just a slice of bread and an onion. Shevach took over the housekeeping with devotion and energy. She prepared stews and puddings that were savored all over the court. But who ever heard of a woman being a rebbe's shammes? Even in Partsev this would have appeared too peculiar. Crude jokers turned up to jeer and mock. Overpious Misnaggedim threatened to have them all cut off from the community of Israel and to drive Reb Mottele out of town on an ox wagon. With my very own eyes, I saw Shevach wearing a caftan and a rabbinical fur hat. She par-took of the remnants of the rebbe's food and danced with all the other Hasidim like Hodel, the Baal Shem's daughter.

"Then suddenly we heard that Reb Mottele was going to marry her. Partsev was thrown into total confusion. Half of Poland was agog with the news. How was it possible? For fifty years Reb Mottele had remained a widower, and suddenly he wanted to get married—and to whom? To an androgyne! The rabbi of Laptsev, a Misnagged himself and half an unbeliever, sent to tell Reb Mottele that it was forbidden to marry an androgyne because the sanctification of marriage and the seven blessings would be rendered null and void. Reb Mottele wrote off asking for a responsum from the Sokhatshever rebbe.

"For years and years, Partsev had been stuck away somewhere in the poorest province of Poland. People had hardly known that such a place as Partsev existed. Now suddenly the whole world was seething with Partsev. Everyone immediately took sides. Shevach herself laid aside her fur hat and went back to wearing a skirt and bonnet. Now the modern radicals really had something to wag their tongues about. According to them, it was obvious that Reb Mottele had simply surrendered to lust. What nonsense! The core of that union was spirit, not flesh. The body is nothing more than a garment. When they are naming souls in the upper world and they call out 'So-and-So, the daughter of Such-and-Such,' no body yet exists, not even in the womb. Not only that—what about the couplings in Heaven? The books of the kabbalah are full of couplings—face to face, back to back—all of them mysteries of mysteries, secrets of secrets.

"I wasn't there, I was still a youth at the time, but it came to a match. The Sokhatshever rebbe gave his permission. The rabbi of Laptsev, half Litvak that he was, refused to perform the marriage ceremony, so they found an assistant. When a widower and a divorcée marry, the wedding is normally a quiet affair, but the layabouts of Partsev made a commotion of it. It was even written up in the newfangled newspapers. There have been scoffers in every generation, even in the time of our father Abraham.

"I could sit and talk to you about it for hours, but I'll cut it short. You asked about sense. The thought doesn't always precede the act. As in the Bible, 'We will do' comes before 'We will hear': people are often prepared to do what is necessary without discussion or debate. Shevach became a celebrity. In the few years that she was the rebbe's wife, she was constantly active. She had the synagogue and the study house rebuilt; she repaired the ritual bath. The old holy volumes used for study had fallen to pieces over the years, and Shevach bought new ones. She'd always known how to find her way around in books; later, she became a great scholar. Reb Mottele had never written down his teachings. He didn't believe in publishing. Shevach began to transcribe everything he said, even his everyday conversation. She had immaculate handwriting.

"Were it not for her, nobody would ever have known about Reb Mottele's greatness. That he was proficient and insightful in his holy studies goes without saying, but he was also as profoundly conversant with secular learning as any of the ancients. As a young man, he'd been a brilliant mathematician. He also played chess. I've looked into Shevach's tracts. They reveal that Reb Mottele discoursed on medicine and Christianity. He knew philology and philosophy. From where? How did the Gaon of Vilna master all the seven sciences? How did King Solomon come to understand the language of the hoopoe, the legendary bird that carried his messages? How was he able to converse with the Queen of Sheba and with Ashmedai? One letter in the Torah contains more wisdom and profundity than all secular books put together. During the last three years of his life, Reb Mottele went blind and deaf. Had it not been for Shevach, he would have been forced to cut himself off from the words of the Torah. Shevach studied with him. She had a voice that he could hear.

"Through all the years that the rebbe suffered sickness, he never for a moment lost his joy. He ordered his bed set up in the synagogue, Hasidim danced around it, and his face shone with a bliss that could have come only from the upper world. The more feeble his body became, the more joyful grew his soul. He danced on swollen feet. His Hasidim drew Shevach into the circle of dance with them. Once again, rationalists had something to bark at. In the last weeks, the rebbe lost his power of speech, but he indicated with gestures that he was elated. When the Hasidim grew faint from their ceaseless dancing and wordless singing, the rebbe opened an eye and murmured, 'So? What's wrong? Why are you quiet?' Many times he started humming a tune. Those who heard the rebbe singing on his deathbed said that no ear had ever heard such sounds before. Angels sing that way. Shevach never left Reb Mottele's bedside. The Hasidim sang, and she sang with them. There was never a question of any hidden sinful thought. When the rebbe passed away, she recited Kaddish. Then the Hasidim drank brandy and danced around the grave.

"After the rebbe's death, his widow went to Warsaw to have his books printed. She had collected subscriptions by sending out pamphlets to rabbis and Hasidim. Because Hasidic leaders and scholars would never have engaged in conversation with a woman, she once again put on men's clothing—not all at once, but little by little. The prohibition against cross-dressing does not apply to an androgyne. She became so famous that a great many wanted to come and establish a following around her, but she never stayed in one place; she wandered continually. She published seven books of Reb Mottele's teachings, commentaries, and sayings. Even more of them remained in manuscript. When she herself passed away, after the ritual cleansing of the corpse an uproar broke out among the members of the Burial Society as to whether or not she should be interred, like a man, in a prayer shawl. A prayer shawl and phylacteries had been found among her possessions. She had worn a ritual undergarment with a double set of eight fringes.

"Reb Mottele's books shared the same fate as Reb Mottele: they are hidden. You very rarely come across one of his monographs. I've got them all on my own bookshelf. There are certain lights that must remain hidden, or else human free will would come to an end. There are certain unions that have no need to couple. There are certain truths that are perceived less the more evident they become. The real truth is this: The whole world is joy. Heaven is a festival all year long. Of all lies, the greatest falsehood is melancholy." ◆

(*Translated, from the Yiddish,
by Joseph Sherman.*)

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THE CRITICS
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## BOOKS

# LEFT BEHIND

*Is Eric Hobsbawm history?*

### BY STEPHEN KOTKIN

In London's National Portrait Gallery hangs a painting of seven people arranged on either side of a low table in a book-lined study. They are historians, members of the editorial board of the journal *Past & Present*, which arose from the British Communist Party's Historians' Group. The Communist Party never transformed Britain, as it had hoped, but the Historians' Group—formed in the mid-nineteen-forties—has a fair claim to have transformed the profession of history. Only a few generations earlier, the main concern of history, as taught at British, and American, universities, had been high politics—kings and popes (the sort whose portraits hang elsewhere in the gallery), as well as presidents and generals. This meant Great Men engaged in dramatic action, usually wars. It was the kind of history that might instruct a future corporate titan, and that, when done well, still sells, and not just around Father's Day.

The members of the Historians' Group directed their efforts elsewhere. Rodney Hilton, a medievalist, pointed out the importance of small market towns and linked the replacement of feudalism by capitalism to "class struggles" of the peasantry. Christopher Hill depicted the seventeenth-century English Civil War as a "bourgeois" revolution, and cast the religious dissenters—Levellers, Diggers, Ranters—as proto-Bolsheviks. E. P. Thompson, searching for signs of socialist revolution during the industrial revolution, presented the Yorkshire artisans of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as radical democrats who compelled reforms with their song and struggle. "I am seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the 'obsolete' hand-loom weaver," Thompson wrote, "from the enormous condescension of posterity." It was a reasonably good motto for the new social historians.

None of these historians, though, achieved greater worldwide prominence than Eric Hobsbawm, a co-founder of *Past & Present*. His subject—pursued in a series of books that traced social, economic, and political developments from the French Revolution to the late twentieth century—was modernity itself. Perhaps Great Man history was dead, but Hobsbawm himself acquired something of the aura of a great man. He never had a "school"—the Historians' Group, in the decade following the Second World War, met upstairs at the Garibaldi Restaurant, on London's Saffron Hill—but he did have notoriety. In the Historians' Group painting, Hobsbawm appears farthest to the left, and his placement is entirely appropriate. After the Soviet invasion of Hungary, in 1956, the other prominent Marxist historians—like countless idealists of their generation—renounced the Party. But Hobsbawm stuck it out, refusing to repudiate the Communist dream. And so an obvious question arises: How could such a celebrated and accomplished historian have remained so oblivious of the lessons of recent history?

Hobsbawm, well into his ninth decade, has now published a disarming autobiography, "Interesting Times" (Pantheon; $30), which offers answers, both contextual and personal. Hobsbawm's father, a British subject and the son of a cabinetmaker of Polish-Jewish ancestry, was a failed tradesman; his mother, an Austro-Hungarian subject, was a novelist. The two married in Zurich—then also a refuge for Lenin, Joyce, and the Dadaists—when their respective empires were at war. Eric was born in British Egypt in 1917, the year of revolution in Russia. A couple of years later, this child of imperialism, war, and revolution moved with his parents to a defeated Vienna. By the Depression, Hobsbawm recalls, politics in Central Europe had been reduced to two colors: brown for the anti-Semitic right, and red for the revolutionary left. When Eric was twelve, his luckless, penurious father dropped dead of a heart attack on the front doorstep; his mother died two years later. Taken in by relatives of his father, Eric was relocated to Berlin in 1931—just in time to catch the death agony of the Weimar Republic. In 1933, Hitler was elevated to Chancellor. The Reichstag burned. The teen-age Hobsbawm distributed leaflets for the soon-to-be-banned German Communists in the March elections; it was, he writes, "my introduction to a characteristic experience of the communist movement: doing something hopeless and dangerous because the party told us to." Being fair-haired and blue-eyed, he was identified as "*der Engländer*" rather than "*der Jude*." The family, having British passports, soon fled to Britain, though out of financial desperation rather than a premonition of the Holocaust. What saved the twice-uprooted boy was the excellent conservative Prussian education he had received in Berlin, and the attention of one of his London grammar-school teachers, which enabled him to win a scholarship to King's College, Cambridge. And the rest, as they say, is history.

The young Eric Hobsbawm, flaunting his polyglot, cosmopolitan sense of self, was evidently less impressed with Cambridge than it was with him. " 'There's a freshman in King's

STEPHEN FREDERICK GODFREY FARTHING, "HISTORIANS OF 'PAST AND PRESENT'" (1999)/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

*The Marxist scholars Hobsbawm, Rodney Hilton, and, seated, Christopher Hill; facing them (right) are their liberal colleagues.*

who knows about everything,' were the words that got around," a 1939 profile in the college weekly, *Granta*, recounted of its outgoing editor. In "Interesting Times," Hobsbawm writes of a finishing school still populated by "plenty of Ricardos and Darwins, Huxleys, Stracheys, and Trevelyans, both among the undergraduates and dons"; and his own college struck him as, for the most part, academically undistinguished. Still, the Cambridge of the nineteen-thirties, he gleefully recalls, "was the reddest and most radical generation in the history of the university, and I was in the thick of it." He ascended to the three-person secretariat of the British Communist Party's local student branch, whose "nursery of revolution was the set of rooms . . . just below Ludwig Wittgenstein." The comrades railed against Hitler, and one of their triumvirate fell in the Spanish Civil War. "The 1930s were for us very far from the 'low and dishonest decade' of the disenchanted poet Auden," Hobsbawm concludes. He absorbed Stalin's "Short Course History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" (1939), whose dialectical materialism "corresponded pretty much to what I, and perhaps most of the British intellectual reds of the 1930s, understood by Marxism." Of Moscow's spies, Blunt and the rest, in Cambridge, Hobsbawm writes, "We respected those who did it, and most of us—certainly I—would have taken it on ourselves if asked." He was not the right sort to be recruited to betray the establishment. But, like Blunt, he was tapped for the Apostles, the Cambridge society whose rolls included Moore, Russell, Wittgenstein, Keynes, Whitehead, and Forster.

Of the Second World War, the epochal event of the century, Hobsbawm says, "I did nothing of significance in it, and was not asked to." Called up in 1940, he spent six years in the armed forces, but he was inside Britain, largely with the Education Corps, and indignant that, despite his linguistic skills and his anti-fascist bona fides, he was denied an intelligence post. Not everyone will share his indignation: he divulges that when he was inducted he made arrangements to maintain contact with the British C.P., and while the Nazi-Soviet Pact was in force he had to toe the line and oppose war against Hitler.

In 1947, his politics notwithstanding, Hobsbawm landed a post at London's Birkbeck College, an evening school for mature students. He commuted from Cambridge, continuing to occupy rooms gratis at King's on a fellowship and to covet a permanent Cambridge position. That offer never came, and Hobsbawm blames an old Cambridge mentor, the staunchly anti-Communist Russian émigré M. M. Postan, and his "poisoned arrow" job references. But if Postan proved a troublesome colleague he was, for Hobsbawm, an indispensable teacher. He looked like a Neanderthal, Hobsbawm recounts, but all the young radicals were attracted to his lectures on economic history, with their "air of intellectual revivalism," and their improbable wealth of references, a continental rebuff to British insularity. As Hobsbawm writes, "What other don would have told us in 1936 to read the recent French *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, not yet famous even in its own country, to invite the great Marc Bloch to lecture in Cambridge?"

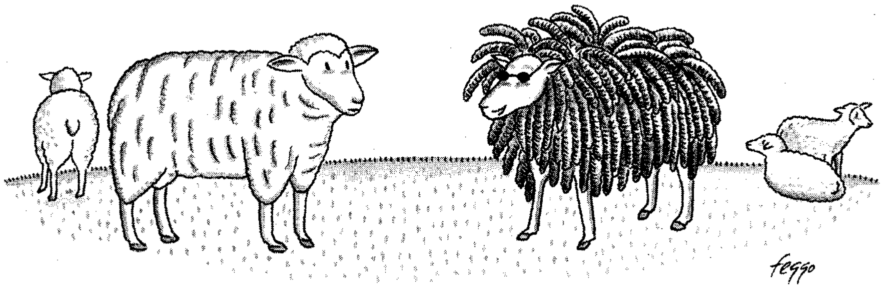
Indeed, few of Hobsbawm's skills better served him than his adeptness in French, for the revolution in historiography that the British Marxists are credited with had really happened earlier, in France. The journal *Annales* was started in 1929, by Bloch and Lucien Febvre, two friends conversant with the new sciences of sociology and geography, psychology and anthropology. In histories of ways of life and ways of thinking, from the Middle Ages to 1800, they and their confrères focussed not on narratives of events—let alone the doings of statesmen and diplomats—but, as the journal's subtitle eventually put it, on "economies, societies, civilizations." After the Second World War, the insurgency grew into a new establishment, led by such luminaries as Fernand Braudel and his successor Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie.

At a time when English translations of monographs by the Annalistes were uncommon, Hobsbawm served as their man in London, fostering the sense that the New History was a single movement. Hobsbawm also befriended, and was befriended by, the *grands Parisiens*, and he is incisive on their theatricality and their formality. ("I cannot think of another country in which a notoriously womanizing, admittedly middle-aged philosopher in the 1950s still had as his stock-in-trade falling on his knees and presenting the lady with a rose," he writes.) Braudel gave him an at-large affiliation, *directeur de recherche*, at his institute. In turn, Hobsbawm extended the Annalistes' reach. Whereas the Annalistes focussed mainly on the world that was lost to modernity—and, in so doing, imagined that they had uncovered something too deep ever to be lost, *la France profonde*—Hobsbawm, of course, addressed more recent times. He acknowledges that Party dogma kept him from twentieth-century topics, but the Party also afforded a freemasonry of contacts, and made possible his discovery of overlooked eighteenth- and nineteenth-century social worlds. On a trip to Italy—he picked up Italian and Spanish on his travels—a Communist professor regaled him with tales of outlaws and millenarians, whom Hobsbawm then tracked "along Mediterranean back roads for the next few years." The fruit of his researches, published in 1959, was "Primitive Rebels," which captured this dying breed of brigands in still rural southern Europe, keenly alive to their self-dramatization and longing for social justice.

Like Communism, jazz—Hobsbawm's other great love—gave him access to an international social network. In fact, he seems to have had political and musical conversions at roughly the same precocious age. When Hobsbawm was a teen-ager, he had caught Duke Ellington performing live at a London club. "It was the season when Ivy Anderson sang 'Stormy Weather,' " he writes, adding that jazz substituted for "first love" and brought "wordless, unquestioning physical emotion" to his brutally cerebral existence. By the time he was an undergraduate, as the *Granta* profile reported, he played the mouth organ and could "go lyrical on the respective merits of 'Pine-tops' Smith, 'Half-Pint' Jaxon, and 'Pee-Wee' Russell." By the mid-fifties, he was writing a jazz column for *New Statesman and Nation*, using the protective pseudonym Francis Newton (after a trumpeter and one of the few players known to have been a Communist). "The Jazz Scene," published simultaneously with "Primitive Rebels," brought the same distinctive, laconic prose and sociological skill to bear on another little-known, intricate milieu. Hobsbawm recounts that on his first trip to the United States, in 1960, he abandoned Stanford's Palo Alto for San Francisco's hip North Beach, then drove to Chicago and met the gospel singer Mahalia Jackson (and her onetime press agent Studs Terkel).

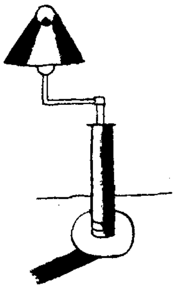
In 1962, the Rockefeller Foundation flew Hobsbawm first class to Latin America to continue his research into the flamboyant benefactors who robbed from the rich and gave to the poor. "Bandits," the book that resulted, introduced characters—like the anarchist plumber Sabaté—who were so compelling, both as types and as individuals, that you wanted to head for the mountains and take on the whole political order, even without a foundation grant. Still, if "social" banditry, to a Marxist, wasn't a crime, it was "archaic," pre-capitalist; the bigger story was capitalism.

No less a capitalist than the publisher George Weidenfeld put Hobsbawm to the task. In 1958, Weidenfeld had asked him to contribute a volume to a series on the history of civilization, and in 1962 he published Hobsbawm's "The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848," which enlarged upon Marx's fable that the contemporaneous British industrial and French political revolutions brought "the bourgeoisie" to power. With a Marxist—or was it Annaliste?—sense of the "totality" of experience, Hobsbawm related innovations in the arts and in the sciences to the economic "demand" of this ascending new class, both the cause and the consequence of political change. He also took a cue from the South Asians he had met at Cambridge in linking



"Loved Jamaica!"

Britain's industrial breakthrough to captive markets of colonial trade. A sequel, in 1975, "The Age of Capital, 1848-1875," showed breathtaking range in encompassing the creation of a world economy. A third volume, "The Age of Empire, 1875-1914," published in 1987, charted economic slumps, imperialist scrambles, and fratricidal war (the one during which Hobsbawm was born): its subject was the self-destruction of "the world made by and for the bourgeoisie." In the academic Age of Specialization, Hobsbawm reëndowed history with sweep. His trilogy drew mostly respectful assessments from "bourgeois" historians. "I love to read Eric Hobsbawm," the Harvard historian David Landes wrote in a critical but appreciative review of "Age of Capital" in the *T.L.S.* "He knows so much; he reads everything; he translates German poetry into English rhyme."



In the discipline of history, anyway, the British Marxists had, like their Annaliste counterparts, become a new establishment. And yet a comparison of the two movements is instructive. For one thing, the Annales school was politically ambidextrous. Bloch died in the Resistance, but Philippe Ariès, who wrote Annales-style history while holding a day job at an institute of tropical plants, had belonged to the fascist Action Française and then worked for Vichy. In his imaginative scholarship on childhood, private life, and ways of death in medieval France, Ariès fashioned a conservative defense of the royalist and Catholic traditions that had produced him—traditions that retained popular appeal despite the secularism of the republic. (So much for the notion that the left alone invented social history.) At the same time, the Annalistes formulated a new paradigm for studying an epoch's collective "*mentalité*."

By contrast, the Marxist template of history came ready-made, even if the British adapted it to their own purposes—the demonstration that rebellious class consciousness was as English as kidney pie. The Marxist narrative was part of what made the work compelling, but it was a hindrance, too. Rodney Hilton's attempts to tie peasant uprisings to the eruption of a new mode of production proved to be a dead end. So have Christopher Hill's efforts to squeeze the English Civil War into the same scheme as the rise of capitalism. Only Thompson's work has had a lasting influence: a lot of contemporary scholarship in subjects like gender relations and mass consumption really grows out of Thompson's emphasis on culture, on the power of shared experience. But Thompson, of course, broke decisively with orthodox Marxism.

And Hobsbawm? In method, he stretched from Thompsonian populist protest ("Bandits") to Braudellian structures ("The Ages" series). His big-picture Marxism struck a chord not just in the broadening left at Western universities but, thanks to his own peripatetic nature, across the Third World, too. And Hobsbawm offered something as well to the non-Marxists whose recognition he sought, for his triptych reads like a cultured, fine-detailed version of the mainstream scholarly consensus—the story of a transition from tradition to modernity, a story known as modernization. Modernization was the common cause that drew liberals to *Past & Present's* "Popular Front" editorial board. Ironically, it was another Marxist, Arno Mayer, who exploded the formulas with his study "The Persistence of the Old Regime" (1981), which showed that aristocracies continued to dominate the ostensibly "bourgeois" century in Europe (let alone in, say, China). Only with the First World War were the old élites levelled, making way for mass society and a people's history.

The elusive nineteenth-century "bourgeois" revolution, then, was less about an amorphous class than about the spread of law and new civic institutions. The *embourgeoisement* of vast areas of the planet, though real enough, was a distinctly twentieth-century phenomenon, and it haunts Hobsbawm's memoir, since it happened to his radical self, too. In the mid-fifties, Hobsbawm moved to Bloomsbury, near the West End clubs and the British Museum. Later, he spent half the year teaching in Manhattan, at the New School, landing a Greenwich Village office above the jazz club Bradley's. The hubs of London and New York, on the wings of Anglo-American

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power—not bad for a displaced orphan, up from the wreckage of old Europe. Having married a "Viennese-born girl," and bought his first car and a house, he acquired a holiday cottage in the Welsh highlands, where the Hobsbawms and other second-home literati "voluntarily lived under the sort of conditions we condemned capitalism for imposing on its exploited toilers." Hobsbawm's world, like the twentieth century, was constituted by total war, imperial ruin, artistic modernism, mass unemployment, displacement, and political fanaticism, but ultimately it saw the triumph of stability and prosperity—a triumph that he takes to be a defeat.

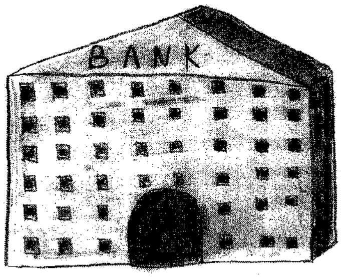
But if Hobsbawm was, as he writes, "unprepared to welcome an era of spectacular capitalist success," he also resisted the New Left, remarking that he did not wear jeans. In the nineteen-seventies, he briefly became a political guru, denouncing Old Labour just before Thatcher eviscerated it. In 1994, following the evaporation of the British C.P., Hobsbawm felt freed to examine his own century, publishing "The Age of Extremes, 1914-1991," whose success can be gauged by its translation into thirty-seven languages. The book is engaging, erudite, and blinkered. Hobsbawm takes seriously the Leninist tenet that no socialist revolution ever occurs without a vanguard party. Accordingly, he holds up the Bolshevik Revolution—the very fact that it happened—as civilization's hope, right through the atrocities. No less troubling is his treatment of the United States: in his account, its administrations never seem to suffer disagreement or cross-purpose—a caricature more monolithic than the one Cold Warriors imposed on the Soviets. In the book's more than six hundred pages, he has little to say about the industrial murder of millions of Jews, while staking out a principled anti-Zionism. Above all, he neither narrates nor explains the century's central story: American supremacy in politics, markets, and mass culture. Hobsbawm acknowledges, in a footnote, that "instead of classifying the economic systems of, say, the USA, South Korea, Austria, Hong Kong, West Germany, and Mexico under the same heading of 'capitalism,' it would be perfectly possible to classify them under several." He further concedes that, in the light of postwar decolonization and transformations in daily life and technology, his overarching framework—the struggle between "capitalism" and "socialism"—may appear ephemeral. And yet while he brilliantly anatomizes the Soviet collapse, he mourns the passing of the Leninist tyranny, in the name of "the peoples" of the former U.S.S.R. and the world's poor.

Once, soon after Stalin's death, Hobsbawm and other members of the C.P. Historians' Group were invited on a rare pilgrimage to Moscow, where they met some ballerinas but saw little of real life, handicapped by the absence of city maps and telephone directories, not to mention (and he doesn't) the presence of stooges. "There was not much to be learned about Russia by visiting it in 1954 that could not have been learned outside," he maintains, adding that he came home "politically unchanged if depressed, and without any desire to go there again." Hobsbawm always talked himself out of disillusionment. He can now admit his failure to foresee consumerism's trumping of leftist revolution in his beloved Spain and Italy. He recognizes—it took Peru's Shining Path—that not every "leftist" movement deserves support. So why his loyalty to the Soviet experiment? Because he was *there*, in 1933 Berlin, because it was the Red Army that "tore the guts out" of the Nazi war machine, because the Soviets furnished a counterweight to the American global empire, because the left "needed something more than social security legislation and rising real wages." He writes, "We were not liberals. Liberalism was what had failed." Of his perseverance, Hobsbawm writes in the plural—"The party was what our life was about"—and suggests that he found fraternity, above all, in the postwar community-based Italian C.P. Communism gave him a platform from which to transcend nationalism as well as individual egoism, to be a partisan for humanity. Still, the tenacity of his allegiance might have come down to vanity. "I could prove myself by succeeding as a known communist, and in the middle of the Cold War," he writes. "I do not defend this form of egoism, but neither can I deny its force. So I stayed." The fact that you're the last one left doesn't mean you have to turn out the light. ♦

# BRIEFLY NOTED

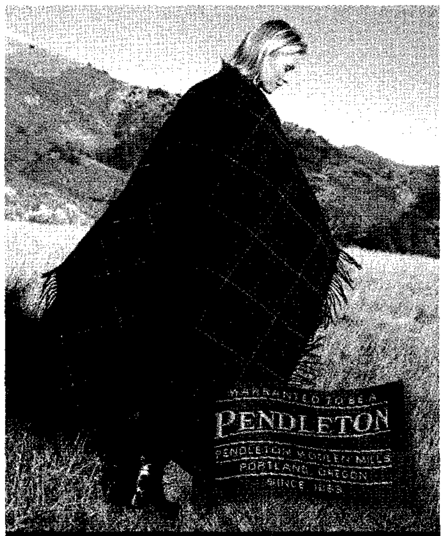
Madam Secretary, *by Madeleine Albright and Bill Woodward (Miramax; $27.95).* This memoir by America's first female Secretary of State is a deeply conventional book, full of long accounts of negotiations and reflections on the proper uses of American power. Albright is not out to settle scores (her criticisms of colleagues are mild at worst) and seems, on balance, pleased with the foreign-policy record of the Clinton Administration. This might have made a dull book, were it not for Albright's appealing character—personally ingenuous but professionally sophisticated, earnest but hard-nosed. Her eye for details—clothing, food, travel conditions—helps bring the diplomat's world to life, and her portraits of foreign leaders are lively and evocative. The result is a book that creates a sense of policy made by real people, not by world-bestriding titans.

Chasing the Sea, *by Tom Bissell (Pantheon; $24.95).* The title of this erratic but enthralling travelogue refers to the attempts of fishermen in Central Asia to pursue the receding waters of the Aral Sea, which has shrunk, since 1960, to less than a third of its original size. In 2001, the author, a self-described "adventure journalist" and failed Peace Corps volunteer, arrives in Uzbekistan to investigate this ecological disaster. Bissell doesn't so much chase the sea as meander toward it, and nine-tenths of the book concerns his detours—to Samarkand, Bukhara, and the guerrilla-infested mountains of Kyrgyzstan—and his run-ins with suspicious local police forces. Bissell shines as a raconteur, if not as an analyst, and his ebullient narrative harks back to the travel classics of the nineteenth century, when the journey was an end in itself.



The Time Traveler's Wife, *by Audrey Niffenegger (MacAdam/Cage; $25).* Young lovers often believe themselves crossed by fate or by time, but those in Niffenegger's spirited first novel have more reason than most. Henry suffers from Chrono-Impairment—a quasi-medical condition that catapults him, unwillingly, from one random point in time to another. Clare first meets him in 1977, when she is six and he materializes near her parents' garden as a thirty-six-year-old from 2000; he returns regularly throughout her childhood from different times in their shared future. At last, when Clare is twenty and Henry twenty-eight, they meet in *his* present, and the relationship begins in earnest. But romance proves even trickier than usual when one person keeps vanishing to distant, and occasionally dangerous, times. Niffenegger plays ingeniously in her temporal hall of mirrors, but fails to make the connection between the lovers as compelling as their odd predicament.

Timoleon Vieta Come Home, *by Dan Rhodes (Canongate; $23).* Carthusians Cockroft, a washed-up composer of British TV jingles, lives in a disintegrating farmhouse in Umbria, his solitude relieved only by a faithful dog, Timoleon Vieta, and a procession of exceptionally fickle boyfriends. Petty and stupid, full of drink and self-pity, Cockroft is a wonderful creation. (He indulges in ludicrously aestheticized fantasies of suicide, such as throwing himself from the top of the Colosseum and "quietly and nakedly falling at the dead of night.") Rhodes never quite succeeds in making this character into a novel. A young hunk, obviously a nasty piece of work, shows up and forces Cockroft to abandon the dog in Rome. The second half of the book, in ironic homage to "Lassie Come-Home," narrates the dog's return by sketching the life stories of those he encounters. Rhodes demonstrates his ability to spin an engaging tale time and again, but to less and less effect with each iteration.



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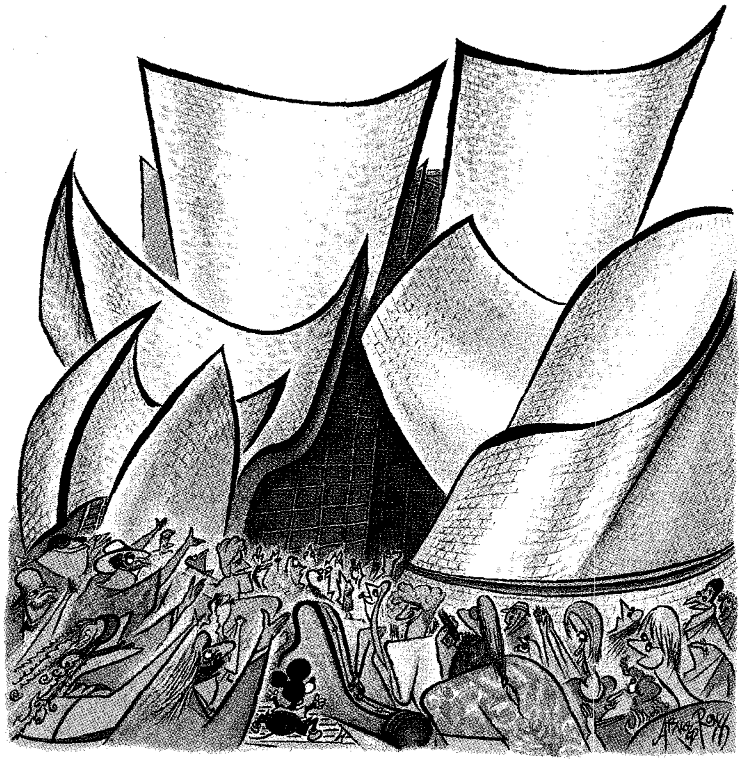
# GOOD VIBRATIONS

*Frank Gehry's Disney Hall is a musical pleasure palace.*

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER

Frank Gehry is one of the most famous architects in the world, and the Walt Disney Concert Hall is the most important thing he has built in his home city of Los Angeles—or anywhere else in the United States, for that matter—so of course people are complaining about it. It looks like Gehry's other buildings. It's too showy. It doesn't contribute enough to the downtown L.A. environment and doesn't justify the $274 million (much of it from private funds) that it cost. These are inevitable, although probably not very significant, views. The building, which opens on October 23rd with a concert by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, has already received the kind of adulatory advance press usually reserved for blockbuster movies. In early September, however, a reporter for the Los Angeles *Times*, Scott Timberg, observed—in a piece that consisted of negative comments about the building—that “a distinct rumble of Disney Hall disenchantment has become audible.” A few days later, another writer in the *Times* remarked that the hall looked like “half-torn-up cardboard boxes left out in the rain, spray-painted silver.”



*Will Disney Hall do for L.A. what the Guggenheim did for Bilbao?*

ARNOLD ROTH

There are those who will never respond to Gehry's work—who feel that his intensely romantic, emotional forms are self-indulgent—and those people are missing an architectural experience of immense power and subtlety. There are also people who admire Gehry's Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, with its swirling mass of titanium cladding, but who think that the Disney building looks too much like Bilbao's second cousin, and like Gehry's performing-arts center at Bard College, and his new business school in Cleveland. These are superficial comparisons. The façade of Disney Hall is more refined than that of the Guggenheim, and more sumptuous, even though it is made of stainless steel, a cheaper material than titanium. Gehry has not repeated himself here so much as he has expanded his architectural vocabulary. Most of Gehry's recent buildings have swooping metal forms, but their shapes are different, their proportions are different, and their relationship to their surroundings is different. Disney and Bilbao are no more similar than buildings designed a few years apart by Mies van der Rohe, or Le Corbusier.

It is ironic that Gehry is being criticized for not producing a building that will transform a dreary, lifeless downtown area, since that is what he did more successfully than any other living architect when he designed the Guggenheim in Bilbao. (The phenomenon is even referred to generally as “the Bilbao effect.”) He made the first truly popular piece of avant-garde architecture in our time, and suddenly everybody else wanted one, including his own city, where he had not received a major commission until 1988, when he won a competition to design the new hall for the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Construction began a few years later but was stalled because of fund-raising problems and issues of design control, and the project ground to a halt in 1994. When the museum in Bilbao opened, in 1997, and Gehry became a household word, the largely unbuilt concert hall (it hadn't got past the foundation and the underground garage) became a major source of embarrassment: Gehry, who is now seventy-four, had lived in Los Angeles since the nineteen-forties, and the city still couldn't get a big Gehry project going. Several civic leaders joined together to resuscitate the building, Gehry updated his designs, and construction resumed in 1999.

Downtown Los Angeles has only a handful of singular pieces of architecture—Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue's Central Library of 1926, Arata Isozaki's Museum of Contemporary Art of 1986, and Rafael Moneo's Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, finished last year—and Disney Hall is now surely the most distinguished building in the area. It is, indeed, monumental, but it isn't fair to say that it doesn't respond to its urban context, which is, more or less, like the downtowns of many other major American cities—a lot of glass skyscrapers surrounded by a lot of freeways. Disney Hall is set on Grand Avenue, a boulevard almost as wide as a freeway, and the site has a steep grade, making it even more unfriendly to pedestrians. Still, the building has a large public garden, and the gracious, flowing staircase at the formal entrance on the corner of Grand Avenue and First Street is far more inviting than any entry to the tired old Dorothy Chandler Pavilion—the Philharmonic's former home—across the street. Gehry has placed the exhilarating stainless-steel sails that define the exterior atop a limestone base, but on the Grand Avenue façade the limestone disappears in favor of hinged glass panels that will open the building up to the street before concerts.

The outside of Disney Hall lifts the spirits of those who see it from the sidewalk or, this being Los Angeles, from the windows of their cars, and the inside is equally inspiring. The auditorium is the finest interior Gehry has ever made. It is constructed of warm Douglas fir and is relatively intimate, with only about twenty-two hundred seats, spread over terraces, balconies, and mezzanines on all sides of the stage. The hall is set within a two-layered plaster box that forms an acoustical shell and soundproofing. Gehry developed its shape with Yasuhisa Toyota, a partner in Nagata Acoustics of Tokyo, who was also his partner at Bard. The focal point, above the stage, is an enormous pipe organ whose wooden pipe enclosures create a sculpture that looks like a stack of lumber that has just exploded. The ceiling seems to be made of fabric rather than of wood, a gargantuan version of the canopy on a fourposter bed. It billows over the hall. The curved wooden walls do not meet the ceiling, and in the space between them one can glimpse white plaster walls behind the wooden forms, washed with light from hidden skylights. The hall appears to float in the larger space.

The shape of the hall and its warm, rich wood suggest a musical instrument, although I doubt that Gehry thinks in such literal terms. He is an expressionist—a romantic expressionist—who has always designed by instinct (even though he could not produce his astonishingly complex buildings without the aid of the most sophisticated computer software, a program called CATIA, used for the construction of aircraft), and what he did here was create a space that is not only acoustically suitable for listening to music but emotionally right for it.

Gehry has, clearly, studied the Berlin Philharmonie hall, which was designed in the nineteen-fifties by the German Expressionist architect Hans Scharoun. Scharoun created the first modern symphony hall in the round, an asymmetrical space with dozens of jutting terraces. It is an exciting place in which to hear an orchestra—and, until now, the only convincing new model for a concert hall—but it appears almost crude in comparison to Disney Hall. One of the best things about Scharoun's building, besides its intense, kinetic energy, is how democratic it is, and Gehry has picked up on this. There are no fancy boxes in the Disney auditorium. I moved around from the front of the orchestra to the side terraces, the mezzanines, and the balconies while listening to a rehearsal of a Mahler symphony, and I could not decide where I would rather sit. There is no obvious hierarchy, and, indeed, the upper-level seats offer a benefit that the seats closest to the musicians do not—the special pleasure of being able to take in the whole of Gehry's space.

The hall was endowed with a fifty-million-dollar gift from Lillian Disney, Walt Disney's widow. Mrs. Disney, who died in 1997, was not, initially, much of a fan of Gehry's architecture, but she was an unusual philanthropist. She didn't insist that her checkbook buy her veto power, although she did tell Gehry that she loved gardens, and he designed the bright carpet and the fabric on the seats in the hall in an intense, abstract version of a floral pattern in tribute to her. Mrs. Disney collected Delft china, and Gehry also designed a witty fountain for the outdoor plaza, a mosaic of pieces of smashed Delft.

Culture can be a potent redevelopment tool. We saw that long ago at Lincoln Center, and it is why great hopes have been placed on the role of cultural facilities at Ground Zero. But the Los Angeles Music Center has sat across the street from the site of Disney Hall for nearly forty years with almost no noticeable effect on the nearby area. It may be that restaurants, stores, and housing will rise up around Disney Hall and transform the neighborhood into the urban mecca that so many people seek, but I wouldn't bet on it, and it doesn't matter. Disney Hall is something rarer than a great urban street. It is a serene, ennobling building that will give people in this city of private places a new sense of the pleasures of public space. ♦

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THE THEATRE

# ME AND MY SHADOW

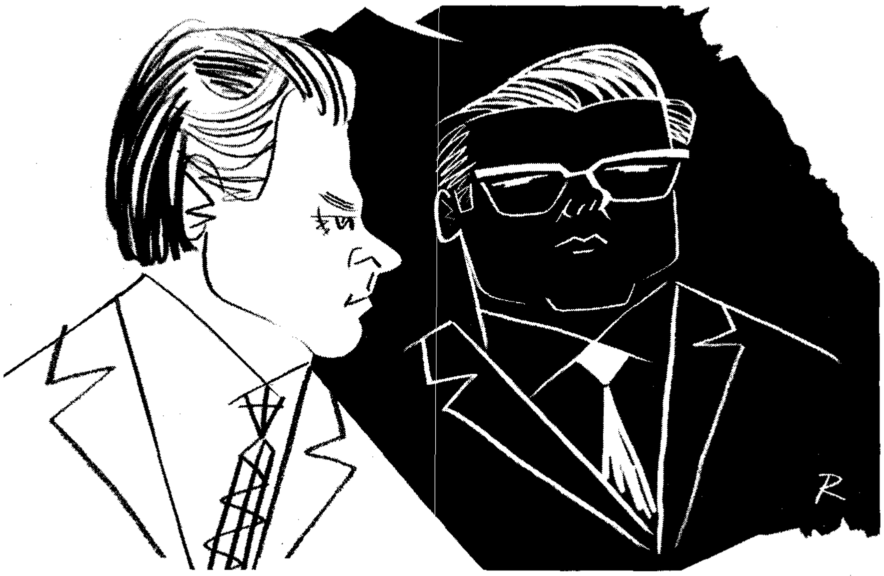
*Michael Frayn on the betrayal of Willy Brandt.*

BY JOHN LAHR

To be human is not to know one's self. The "I" that we confidently broadcast to the world is a fiction—a jerry-built container for the volatile unconscious elements that divide and confound us. In this sense, personal history and public history share the same dynamic principle: both are fables agreed upon. In his latest entertainment, "Democracy" (at London's Royal National Theatre), Michael Frayn circles around this conundrum. "Everyone has a range of possibilities and characters in themselves," Frayn said recently. "And the process of arriving at a common policy is curiously complex. A bit like a Cabinet making decisions. . . . There's a sort of democracy going on inside each of us." With its swift, impressionistic narrative style, dexterously orchestrated by the director Michael Blakemore, "Democracy" plays a game of three-card monte with the audience. The hubbub of shifting events and perspectives is Frayn's sleight of hand, and it allows him to disguise the unsettling issue of psychological identity beneath the flashy spectacle of history.

On its surface, "Democracy" tells the extraordinary story of Willy Brandt, a Social Democrat who, having escaped Nazi persecution, returned to Germany from Scandinavian exile after the Second World War and soon rose through the ranks to become mayor of West Berlin, foreign minister, and, finally, in 1969, Chancellor—the first left-of-center German leader since Hitler had put paid to democracy, forty years earlier. Brandt's policy of reconciliation—his *Ostpolitik*—helped to heal West Germany's relationship with its former enemies in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, including East Germany. "The consequences of this reconciliation reached far beyond Germany," Frayn writes in a thirty-seven-page postscript to the published play. "They changed the face of Europe, and of the world, by making possible the gradual scaling down of the Cold War—and thereby, eventually, an event that Brandt never foresaw: the end of the very state whose existence he had recognized, followed by the collapse of the entire Soviet Empire."

Here we first catch sight of the poised and charming Brandt (Roger Allam) as



*The spy Günter Guillaume is the ultimate Nobody to Willy Brandt's Somebody.*

ROBERT RISKO

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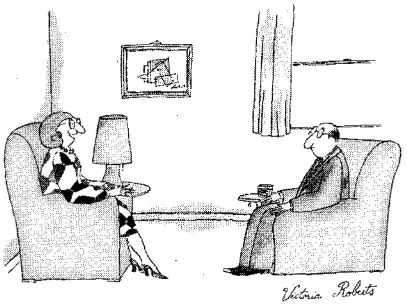

*"Don't worry, Howard. The big questions are multiple choice."*

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he stands above us, accepting the Chancellorship, on a two-tiered white set that serves as both a public platform and the Palais Schaumburg. His story is narrated with a sort of breathless enthusiasm by Günter Guillaume (Conleth Hill), the Chancellor's factotum, who was also a Stasi spy. As Hill expertly plays him, Guillaume is the ultimate Nobody to Brandt's Somebody—a pudgy Pecksniff whose absolute allegiance to power gives definition to his amorphous lost soul. For the four years of Brandt's coalition government, Guillaume had access to Brandt and to his private papers. Thirteen years earlier, he and his wife, Christel, also a spy, had been slipped into West Germany. At the time, Christel was the more effective operative; then inept bureaucratic karma and plain good luck combined to elevate Guillaume from his cover as a loyal Social Democratic Party official in Frankfurt to a junior position in Brandt's office in Bonn. And, as the play demonstrates—"Anything I can do for you, Reinhard? Filing? Copying? Watering the plants? . . . No job too big or too small"—the chirpy Guillaume quickly made himself useful to his employers, at once the perfect dogsbody and one of the most effective moles in the history of espionage.

Frayn, who studied moral philosophy at university, is interested more in the ironies of Guillaume's surveillance than in the intricacies of his treachery. Whether Stasi informer or S.D.P. aide-de-camp, Guillaume is compelled to merge himself with the object of his attentions. In a self-inflating act of imaginative symbiosis, he casts himself as "the perfect servant to two masters. . . . My two great masters." His habit of being is an act of transference, and, at heart, he is a true believer, a kind of incorrigible fan. "You can't help trusting him," Guillaume gushes, after listening to one of Brandt's speeches. "When you're there in the audience. You look up at him—and there he is, looking straight back at you. You personally. Talking to you alone." To his Stasi spymaster, Guillaume is "the jewel in [the] crown"; to himself, Brandt and he are "Willy and Günter. The noble hero and his comic servant. Don Quixote and his Sancho Panza."

"I do not want to force anyone to his knees," Brandt once said. "Nor will I let anyone force me to kneel." In the end, however, he was brought down by the revelation of Guillaume's betrayal. In 1974, when a long list of Brandt's extramarital conquests was leaked, along with other matters of state, Brandt was forced to resign; Guillaume spent seven and a half years in prison before being repatriated to East Germany in exchange for a group of political prisoners. "Democracy" 's news, however, is not its synthesis of German politics but the oblique mystery of personality that it traps in the telling. As the play makes clear, Brandt at first disliked Guillaume; in fact, he requested that he be transferred. "Herr Guillaume . . . carries ordinariness a little too far," he says. "Find me someone else." Over time, however, he came to depend on him. Even after he had been tipped off to Guillaume's treachery, he continued to employ him for the best part of a year. The question in Frayn's drama is not whodunit but why-he-dunit.

A clue, it seems, lies in Guillaume's astonishing emptiness, his sycophantic neutrality. Guillaume's marriage is a shambles; his relationship with his beloved teen-age son consists of a weekly drive to the airport to watch planes take off. He has no apparent interests other than work and occasional womanizing. Scuttling in and out of conversations in his dark suit, lingering on the periphery of rooms, often with his back to the events he overhears, Guillaume is an almost disembodied figure. "They've forgotten about me," he tells his Stasi controller. "I'm the hatstand in the corner." And, in a way, he's right. "Pastor Nobody," Brandt calls him.

"Eavesdropping on my own absence" is how Guillaume describes the experience of being briefly smuggled back to East Germany; and this is precisely what Brandt does in Guillaume's company. He recognizes in Guillaume his own internal impoverishment, which his success hides from the world and, to a degree, from himself. In the parallel reflections that Frayn cunningly sets up, both men turn out to be fatherless; both are masters of disguise and engineers of trust; both are deeply divided; both are trapped by the roles they've adopted. "Is it him I'm seeing in the half-light, or is it a reflection of myself?" Guillaume asks at one point, as Brandt, who is given to fits of depression and regret, unburdens himself on one of their many train junkets together. The play makes much of Brandt's intuition—"some small voice that speaks to him, and to none of the rest of us," one minister calls it. That psychological radar, Frayn implies, is picking up Guillaume's signals. "I could have been a spy, Günter," Brandt says at one point, toying with his aide and with us. "Might be one, for all you know. Might be spying now." And, of course, in both a literal and a psychological sense, he is. Guillaume calls out of Brandt the names he used while in hiding in Norway in the thirties: Karl Martin, Willy Flamme, Felix Franke. Quoting Walt Whitman, Brandt tells Guillaume, "Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself. I am large, I contain multitudes." Referring to himself as "a suitcase with a series of false bottoms," Brandt is haunted by his own shape-shifting and by a vague memory of authenticity, of an essential self: "The one you can remember finding once, and that you can never quite find again. The little boy that Herbert Frahm might have been if his father had brought him up and told him stories and played with him. Or even acknowledged his existence and given him his name. . . . The boy I might have been, and never was."

In Frayn's theatrical shorthand, where characters talk alternately to one another and to us, ideas are narrated, not demonstrated, which, for me, is a theatrical limitation. "Democracy" is really an essay with legs. Nonetheless, the playwright's sinuous intelligence and his daring narrative design are in themselves a spectacle. Frayn is all finesse. At the end of "Democracy," for instance, the divided Germany, which Brandt succeeds in unifying, becomes a symbol of Brandt's own longing for harmony. As the sound of the Berlin Wall's collapsing masonry rumbles through the theatre, Brandt says, "At last what belongs together is coming together. Our divided self has become one self." The moment plays as both public fact and private anguish. Guillaume, staring at the hero whose fame he subverted, sounds the spoiling note of infamy: "Wherever he goes, my shadow goes with him," he says. "Together still." This last fillip of psychological paradox echoes an all too resonant political paradox, which was perhaps best stated by the former British Prime Minister Clement Attlee. "Democracy," he said, "means government by discussion, but it is only effective if you can stop people talking." ♦

MUSICAL EVENTS

# TAKE THE N TRAIN

*Carnegie Hall's subterranean extension.*

BY ALEX ROSS

Zankel Hall, the new midsized venue at Carnegie Hall, is billed as a "new space underground." The phrase describes not only Zankel's location—about forty feet below Seventh Avenue, and three yards to the east of the Fifty-seventh Street station—but also its promise of a mildly rebellious attitude. With an opening two-week festival that includes contemporary composition, jazz, performance art, and a modicum of traditional repertory, Zankel aims to go against the grain, to shake things up, to provide an alternative to the solemn concert rituals that unfold in such places as, well, Carnegie Hall. How can an institution go underground and rebel against itself? Such are the paradoxes of the classical-music scene, which seeks to entice new audiences without alienating the moneyed classes and connoisseurs who have historically supported it.

I attended seven of the first nine events in the hall, and I came away with an immediate liking for the look and feel of the space. The vertical surfaces are made of sycamore, the floors of maple. A vaguely summery wicker-type pattern predominates. Overhead is a sleek black array of lights, speakers, and other high technology; it's as if one of George Lucas's imperial starships were hovering above. The atmosphere falls somewhere between the calming hush of a desert spa and the nervous importance of a secret military bunker. Tired commuters on the N/R platform will little suspect that Pierre Boulez is conducting a violent orchestra of pianos and percussion on the other side of the grimy tiles.

The subway is distinctly audible as it rumbles behind the right wall. I tried and failed to dismiss the noise as a minor annoyance; it kept intruding on my consciousness, like a neighbor who moves furniture at irregular intervals in the middle of the night. There are, however, advantages to being subterranean: cell phones don't work. The hall's acoustics are bright and vivid, but also uneven. The Emerson Quartet made a full, rich sound; Emanuel Ax's piano seemed uncharacteristically tinny. The three women in the Theatre of Voices ensemble had no trouble projecting the needlepoint canons of Guillaume de Machaut; Renée Fleming's voice lacked the radiance that it possesses at the Met. Amplified music suffered least. When the Cuban jazz pianist Omar Sosa performed with his octet, the sound had amazing heft and brilliance. The acoustical problems are offset by the lively personality of the place. Something about it makes you want to look around and talk and linger. This is a welcome contrast to the halls of Lincoln Center, which practically spit you out onto the sidewalk.

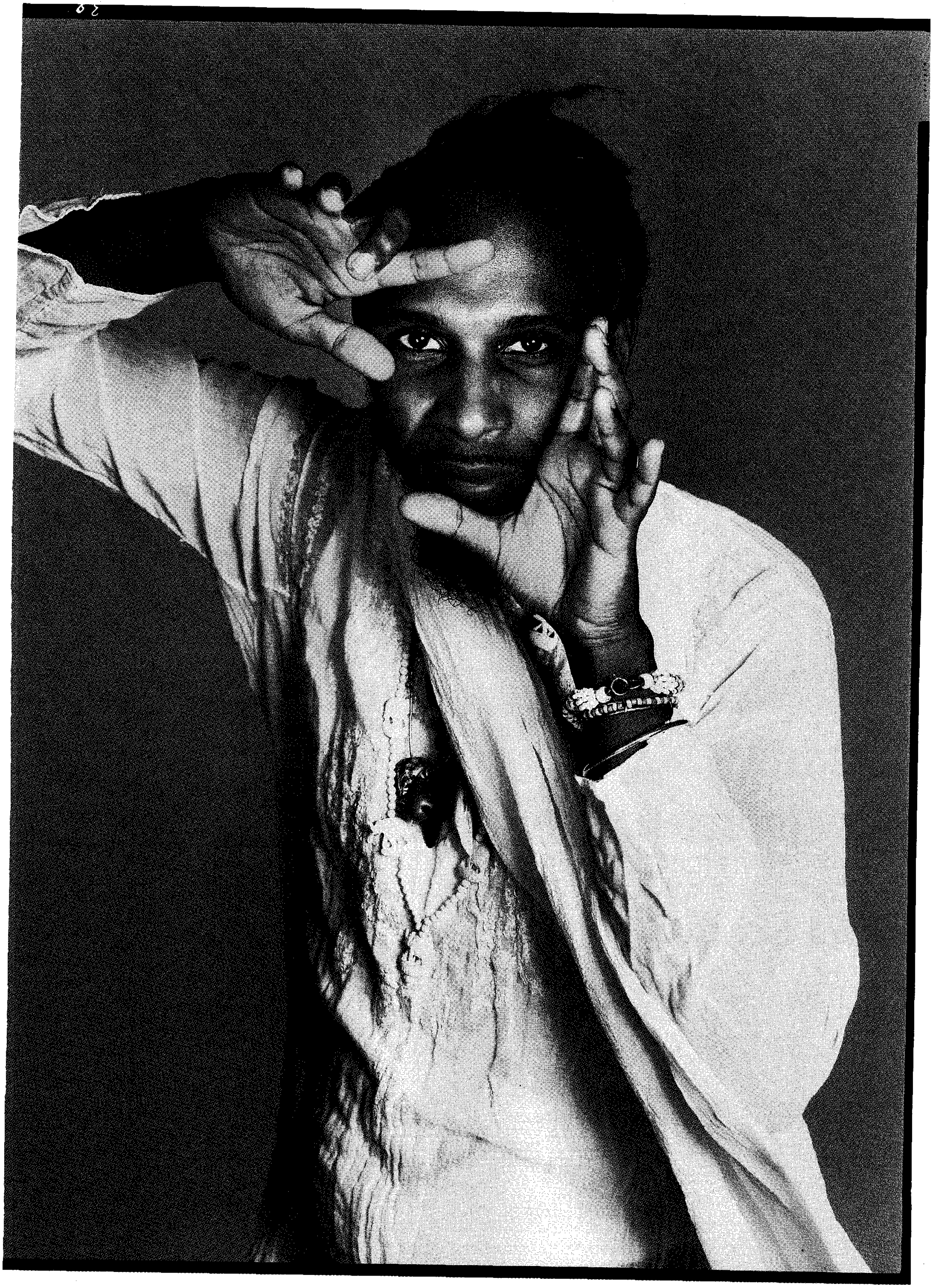
The thirty-eight-year-old Omar Sosa and the seven-hundred-year-old Guillaume de Machaut met up thanks to the happily gallivanting taste of John Adams, who curated the opening weekend and conducted the first concert. In the pit was a group called the Zankel Band, which was made up of graduates of Carnegie's various professional workshops. The rough Yankee polyphony of Ives's "From the Steeples and the Mountains" officially inaugurated the hall; after that came works by a Californian, a Londoner, and a Finn—Lou Harrison's "Concerto in Slendro," Thomas Adès's "Living Toys," and Esa-Pekka Salonen's "Mania." Of these, the delicately percussive Harrison fared best; it danced in place like a robot hoedown.

Sosa followed the same night, at ten. His octet included the Yoruba vocalist Martha Galarraga, the percussionists Gustavo Ovalles and Josh Jones, the Moroccan singer Yassir Chadly, the hip-hop poet Brutha Los, the saxophonist Luis Depestre, and the bassist Geoff Brennan. As if that weren't enough, the encyclopedic Sosa threw in Bachian inventions, stylized Latin dances in the manner of Gottschalk, and John Cage-esque prepared sounds. He also came up with a few hauntingly memorable melodies; I can't shake one called "Dias de Iyawo." At times, the evening threatened to devolve into a multicultural traffic jam, but Sosa kept it all moving with a ferocious flair for rhythm and a keen musical wit. At one point, he began pounding out a simple tonic-dominant progression in rapid-fire chords, and the force of his delivery unleashed a minor delirium among musicians and listeners alike. Sosa then upped the ante by playing the piano with one foot. A lot of people will be grateful to Adams for bringing Sosa into their world.

Adams is a composer who moves confidently across a gamut of styles, and the weekend expressed his sensibility without a note of his music being played. Concertgoers know all too well the kind of programming that looks wonderful on paper but falls flat in practice; Adams's choices, by contrast, sounded more logical than they looked. Anna Deavere Smith, who performed on the second day, is not a musician at all, and her monologues might have seemed better suited to a theatre than to a concert hall. But when she mentioned Adams's experimental work "Christian Zeal and Activity," and its effect on her understanding of the musicality of speech, I started noticing how she used pitch and rhythm to sharpen her characterizations. The evening was a sort of "greatest hits" package of Smith's legendary one-woman performances, from her twenty-six-character study of the Crown Heights riots to her Clinton-era fantasia on the White House. Her startlingly realistic re-creation of a 1970 conversation between James Baldwin and Margaret Mead played like a duet of viola and trombone. A Korean liquor-store owner who lost her store in the Rodney King

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

*The Cuban jazz pianist Omar Sosa was part of Zankel Hall's opening festival, curated by the composer John Adams.*



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riot kept dipping into a deep register, revealing an abyss of anger behind a tight-lipped façade. The Madeleine Albright character stayed in a monotonous middle range, obtrusive in her blandness; she illustrated her own dictum "Americans can't blend in."

The opening weekend also included the sometimes languid, sometimes hyperkinetic post-bop jazz of the Kenny Barron Quintet; Frederic Rzewski, giving a survey of his stylistically capricious, politically impassioned output for piano; and Paul Hillier's Theatre of Voices, which ranged from the fourteenth-century counterpoint of Machaut to the up-to-the-minute digital effects of Ingram Marshall. (Marshall's "Hymnodic Delays," based on old New England hymns, was the most striking of the new compositions on display.) Machaut's "Lai de la fonteinne" had the distinction of being the only "classical" European music heard in the first three days of Zankel Hall; in this context, it came off like an austere exercise in post-minimalist composition. More familiar names followed in subsequent concerts—Bach, Handel, Haydn, and Dvořák—but only one program in the first two weeks failed to include a living composer.

What's missing so far from the Zankel mix is a really bold engagement with popular music other than jazz. Pop artists might be given the programming power that Adams enjoyed on his opening weekend. Brian Eno, Caetano Veloso, or Björk could curate an entire series, mixing genres to their hearts' delight. And, if Zankel really wants to acquire an "underground" reputation, it should push past the roster of well-known names. The other night, at the Knitting Factory, I saw the veteran Dutch band The Ex, who blend hardcore punk with African, Latin, and avant-garde sounds. It is territory ripe for colonization by the Zankel sensibility. The trick, of course, would be in persuading a group of unregenerate anarchists to play under the auspices of Andrew Carnegie's palace of music.

Unfortunately, the opening of Zankel is not the only flurry of news that Carnegie has lately created. In June, the hall announced that within a few years it would begin presenting the New York Philharmonic, which has had enough of Lincoln Center, and, from what one hears, Lincoln Center of it. There is no point in pretending that the Philharmonic's hundred-and-thirty-concert schedule would allow anything like the glorious array of events that the main hall now offers. Yes, Carnegie accommodated the Philharmonic in decades past, but the orchestra played many fewer concerts then, and it was led by such legends as Mahler and Toscanini. The present-day Philharmonic not only likes the fitfully inspired Lorin Maazel but is likely to extend his contract. Great international orchestras are not going to squeeze themselves into the odd Sundays and Mondays that Carnegie will make available; they will move en masse to Lincoln Center, which is prepared to offer them open-ended, festival-style programming. What is more, Carnegie has to take on the entire institutional mentality of the Philharmonic, which, for all its technical prowess, is one of the most militantly conservative orchestras in the world. What will happen to Zankel's sense of adventure when the spirit of the Philharmonic starts seeping through the floor? It will go the way of Pierre Boulez's Rug Concerts and the orchestra's other short-lived flirtations with modernity.

Carnegie is trying to turn left and turn right simultaneously. It wants to bring in a downtown-ish clientele while acquiring a stable base of Philharmonic subscribers. This urge to absorb everything typifies the modus operandi of Sanford Weill, the chairman of the Carnegie board, who is also the outgoing chief executive of Citigroup. Weill made his name in the financial world by engineering a series of spectacular mergers; he ingeniously erased the distinction between brokering and banking by combining Salomon, Smith Barney and Citibank under one roof. He now wishes to apply the philosophy of synergy to New York's artistic life. The sort of logic that brought us AOL Time Warner is creating Philharmonic Carnegie Zankel. When it comes to the mysteries of artistic administration, mine is not to reason why, but if I had a say in the matter I would scuttle the Philharmonic plan and scuttle it fast. Carnegie should remain a shining city for the best of the musical world. ♦

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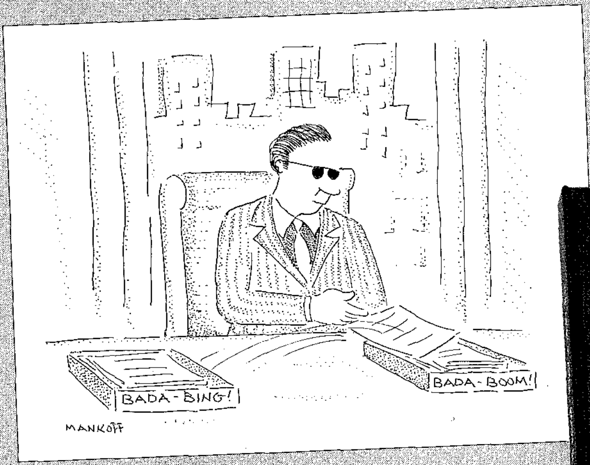
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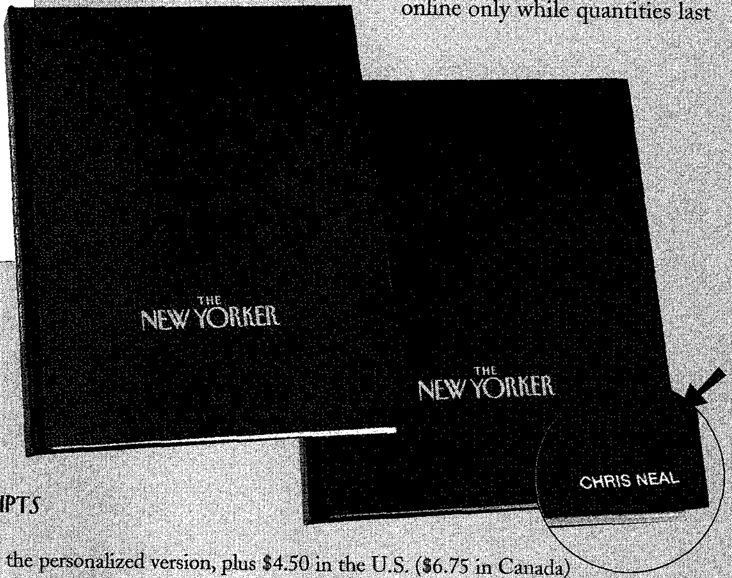
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# BLUES CLUES

*The music heard round the world.*

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

*Fieldwork in the Delta: Martin Scorsese and others dig down to the roots of the blues.*

There is probably no American filmmaker whose movies are more colored by—even, sometimes, propelled by—music than Martin Scorsese's, so music fans have been eagerly looking forward to the seven-part PBS series "The Blues," for which he served as executive producer. At the beginning of the first film in the series, "Feel Like Going Home," which Scorsese also directed, he says, "I can't imagine my life, or anyone else's, without music. It's like a light in the darkness that never goes out." He gave six other directors the freedom to make the films they wanted to make, while seeing to it that the basic ground—the history and influence of the Delta blues—was more or less covered. The resulting movies, individually and as a group, make no pretense to definitiveness—blues fanatics, and even normal music fans, will notice omissions. But though the series isn't quite a balanced meal—each course lasts about ninety minutes—by the end of it you are likely to feel full. (You may feel a little too full, in fact: the series, which begins this Sunday, runs for seven straight nights—not the most viewer-friendly programming approach.)

The movies in "The Blues" all have a loose, just-let-the-film-roll feel, and they've been edited in what comes across as a slapdash way, which may be the result of an executive decision to let the music speak for itself as much as possible. (The final film in the lineup, directed by Clint Eastwood, wasn't ready for viewing at press time.) The series is aimed more at the ears, and the heart, than at the head. Often you have no idea of the significance of an archival performance—of what you're supposed to be listening *for* and how it influenced other musicians—or why the contemporary footage in a given film is sometimes shot in black-and-white and sometimes in color. But the films (with one exception) do have life in them, and their rich material commands your attention.

As the lead-off film in the series, Scorsese's has to establish the music's roots, and it does so in a leisurely amble through blues history, beginning in Mississippi, working its way across to Alabama, and then over to West Africa and back. Our tour guide is Corey Harris, a young musical polymath whose own recordings have explored numerous arteries of the blues. This I know thanks to Google; the show never properly identifies him, despite the fact that current blues practitioners are more likely to need an introduction than the ones from fifty years ago. Although the film opens with some startlingly strange old footage of three men in a field, dancing and playing a fife and drums, and then, halfway through, startles us further by showing us the same music being played in northern Mississippi today, its coverage of the basics—tales of John and Alan Lomax recording musicians in the nineteen-thirties for the Library of Congress; black work gangs being watched over by a rifle-toting white man; people picking cotton; the grizzled bluesman Son House laying down the law about what the blues is ("Ain't but one kind of blues. And that consists between male and female that's in love")—oddly lacks much of Scorsese's usual personality and drive.

Wim Wenders's film, "The Soul of a Man," is both disorganized and didactic. After an inexplicable beginning—in which you hear the disembodied voice of a man pretending to be Blind Willie Johnson, talking about how a record he cut in 1927 went up into deep space on Voyager—you get a lot of 1931 performances by Skip James, alternating with latter-day covers by such musicians as Beck, Lucinda Williams, Lou Reed, and Bonnie Raitt. But it's hard to decide whether you even like the newer versions, since you get only snippets of the songs and you're too busy comparing those with snippets of the originals. It's like being at the eye doctor: Better? Or worse? Better? Or worse? Or the same?

R. GREGORY CHRISTIE

In the middle of "The Soul of a Man" is a film within the film: some wonderfully homey footage taken in the mid-sixties of J. B. Lenoir, who wrote songs about the Vietnam War and civil rights. (The film was made for Swedish TV, by a couple named Steve and Ronnog Seaberg, but was never shown.) Here, too, we hear contemporary performers sing fragments of the old songs—which is particularly maddening in the case of Bonnie Raitt's gorgeously sensual but truncated rendition of the Lenoir song "Round and Round."

Richard Pearce's "The Road to Memphis" is also about the road away from Memphis—the touring life that is the lot of most musicians—and it's the first movie of the series to deal overtly with race. (Harris does say at the beginning of the first movie that music is "the one thing they could never take away from black people," but that leaves a lot unsaid about the knotty fact that the blues as we know it owes its very existence to all the things that had already been taken away from black people.) The movie gives a real sense of the buffetings the musicians took as a result of commercial decisions, changes in popular taste, and complicated racial attitudes—buffetings that sometimes lifted them up and sometimes knocked them down. Once soul music and rock came into the picture, things changed. B. B. King talks about being booed one night in Baltimore. "It was like being black twice," he says. Then he talks about the astonishing response he got some years later, after white college kids had discovered the blues. At the Fillmore, in San Francisco, in 1968, the audience stood up and applauded, a reception that made King cry. "That night," he says, "instead of ninety per cent black, we had ninety-five per cent white—the first time ever. And that was a feeling I don't know how to describe but I wish I could."

"Warming by the Devil's Fire," the movie by Charles Burnett, who happens to be the only black director in the series, is educational in the worst way. It tells the fictional story of a Northern boy who is sent to the South in 1956 to visit his ne'er-do-well Uncle Buddy and to be properly baptized. Every line in this canned narrative teaches a lesson, and you can imagine thousands of bored schoolchildren zinging rubber bands and spitballs across the classroom while they watch. The movie that follows, "Godfathers and Sons," by Marc Levin, also suffers a little from having a point to prove—that hip-hop is connected to the blues. Chuck D., of Public Enemy, talks a few too many times about how he was affected by a 1968 rock-infused Muddy Waters album called "Electric Mud," and how kids today know nothing of their musical history. "Electric Mud" was produced by Marshall Chess, the son and nephew of the founders of Chess Records, the most influential Chicago blues label, and in "Godfathers and Sons" Chess himself is on hand to tell the stories of the label and of his family. But while Chess's heart is clearly in the right place—he loves music and musicians—his mouth often isn't. Chess Records was probably run more responsibly and responsively than most labels of the day, but Marshall doesn't do its legacy any favors with comments like "It wasn't the label that said, 'I want to be the company store'—it was the artists coming every day: 'I need, I want.' "

The sixth installment, Mike Figgis's "Red, White & Blues," is delicious for music fans who know only a little something about the cross-pollination between American blues, folk, jazz, and rock and English music-hall, dance-band music, and skiffle that produced the British Invasion (and led to the late-sixties blues revival here). British musicians from Humphrey Lyttleton, a bandleader born in 1921, to Eric Clapton and Lonnie Donegan talk on camera about how they absorbed, in a ravenously indiscriminate way, every strain of American music that made its way across the ocean. Having seen, in earlier movies in the series, how deep the roots of the blues go, you see in this one how far its branches have reached.

Scorsese's series shows that the blues really is everybody's music. It's ultimately impossible to define—it's a feeling, and you know it when you hear it. Several musicians in the six movies say that the blues is the truth; at the end of Figgis's film, B. B. King says that the blues is "life—life as we live it today, life as we lived it in the past, and life as I believe we'll live it in the future." Or, as a member of an earlier British Invasion almost put it, "Blues is truth, truth blues—that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." ♦

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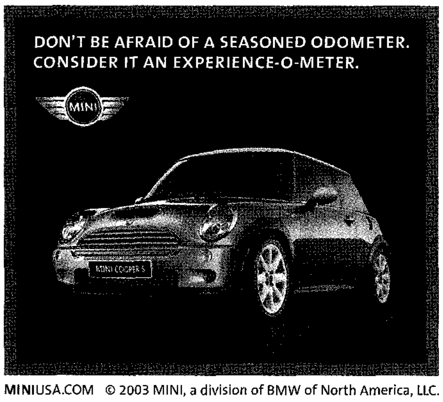

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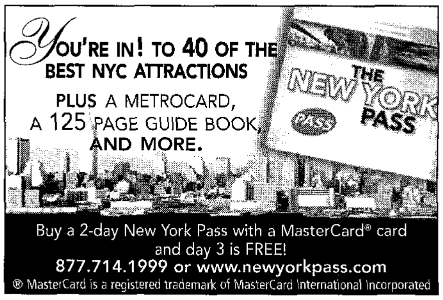

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*"Under the Tuscan Sun," "To Be and to Have," "Anything Else."*

BY DAVID DENBY

"Under the Tuscan Sun" might be called a soft-core renovation fantasy for educated women. Frances (Diane Lane), a San Francisco writer and professor who has been dumped by her adulterous husband, goes on a bus tour of Tuscany and buys a crumbling villa there. Many blissfully undramatic rehab adventures follow—an old wall falls down, a toilet mysteriously emits boiling water—before the house gets scraped, plastered, painted, and gardened back into shape. But it's Frances's life, of course, that really needs work. The writer-director Audrey Wells ("Guinevere") has taken Frances Mayes's matter-of-fact memoir of restoring a summer residence with her husband and turned it into an emotional tale of a single woman's search for fulfillment—a vehicle for the freshly minted thirty-eight-year-old star Diane Lane, who was so ravenously hungry in Adrian Lyne's 2002 adultery drama, "Unfaithful." Onscreen, Lane has a masklike dissatisfaction and a heroic determination to cheer herself up. With a great script, she could become a sleeker, less intellectual Jeanne Moreau. This movie, though perfectly pleasant, does not have a great script. But I'm not knocking Wells's commercial reshaping of the book, which was probably necessary if Mayes's immersion in antiquities and curious risotto recipes was ever going to be turned into an acceptable narrative. Mayes's book is only one example of a flourishing publishing phenomenon: the many volumes devoted to the upper-middle-class American dream of getting away to a primal paradise of sunshine, sex, love, terra-cotta tiles, and huge salads with real tomatoes. Wells has kept those parts of the fantasy intact, and, if "Under the Tuscan Sun" snuggles comfortably into its cocoon of middlebrow formula, that's probably all any of us want from it—two hours of *rustico* charm.

Breathlessly, we wait for Him to appear—the lover who was not present in Mayes's book but is absolutely necessary to this kind of movie. Who will it be? It can't be the sweet-souled but happily married real-estate agent who obviously admires Frances, or any of the three Polish workmen at the villa, one of whom is a mere teen-ager. Frances goes to Rome to get away from the plaster dust, and there He is, right in the street, in the more than presentable person of Raoul Bova. Virile, with yard-wide shoulders, blue-green eyes, a sheepish smile, and a boxer's nose, he's all of Italian manhood in a white suit. He takes Frances off to Positano, his picturesque home town, in a black convertible. Wells then has a tricky problem on her hands: she wants to deliver the romantic payoff integral to the fantasy, but she wants to avoid clichés, too. She solves her problem by doing the sappy stuff and joking about it at the same time. Frances teases that the man's name is Marcello ("What else?"), that he talks just like an Italian in an American woman's fantasy. He then announces (I think), "I am going to make love all over your body." ("What did he say?" women around me kept asking.) The sex, however, is a little tame in comparison with the volatile encounters in "Unfaithful." The most active moment in the affair is Lane's teen-age leap of joy when she savors the thought of it.

Wells has shrewdly removed the note of self-satisfaction from Mayes's book. This Frances is not a household genius but a stumbling, self-conscious American who makes mistakes, recovers, finds her way. And the fantasy has been re-

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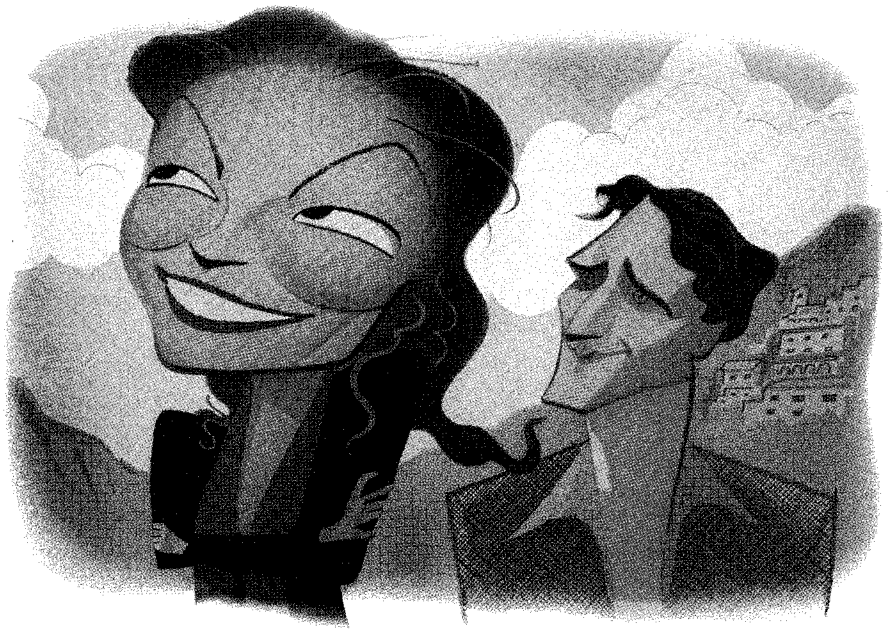
deemed by an infusion of San Francisco humor. Frances's friend Patti (Sandra Oh), a pregnant Asian-American lesbian with a sharp wit, shows up in Tuscany. In romantic comedies made in the thirties the heroines often had funny unmarried sidekicks, but their sexual proclivities were never even hinted at, except by the cognoscenti. The openness of the gay behavior here is relaxed in its candor; and the unconventional new family that inhabits the villa helps take the snobbery out of the old daydream of an American lady bountiful who restores lazy Italy to its former glory. There is, however, one alien element in America's improving touch. As Frances contentedly picks grapes, Wells admires nearby fields of flowers, so entirely uniform in their appearance they seem to have been planted in order to be photographed.

The physical beauty in the French rural documentary "To Be and to Have" is a little more authentic—heavy snows, bare oak trees, and herds of fatted cows butting into one another. The recurring bovine presence in the movie may well have been intended to remind us that not all God's creatures are fortunate enough to undergo the rigors of a traditional French education. I'm not joking: Nicolas Philibert's "To Be and to Have" is an ardent celebration of one special stop along the difficult road of becoming a human being—in particular, a French human being. The French passion for definition and precision and for emotion exactly appropriate to the occasion has rarely appeared more attractive.

"To Be and to Have" unfolds in a one-room stone schoolhouse in the Auvergne presided over by Georges Lopez, a veteran teacher in his mid-fifties, who is lean, quick, and devastatingly adroit. M. Lopez is required to deal with thirteen children in one classroom: the youngest are three-year-olds who whine for their *mamans* and the oldest are roly-poly, fistfighting eleven-year-olds. He divides the children into three groups and enforces strict discipline, which is probably necessary to avoid chaos. No one could call his methods progressive; no one could call them ineffective, either. What's striking about Lopez is the remarkably individualized attention he gives each child. Well, you say, what else should primary-school teaching be about? Lopez's priorities are perfectly normal. But seeing the intensity of his work from moment to moment, child by child, is a revelation of craft exercised on a level at which skill cannot be distinguished from love. Philibert brings the same kind of dedication to his own work. The children are great, unwary camera subjects, and he gives us beautifully composed views of them (no blurring or handheld jiggles). Each shot in the unhurried progression is a kind of portrait, granting us enough time to observe a child closely, imagine his circumstances, and see what he does or does not understand. "To Be and to Have" is a deeply satisfying aesthetic and pedagogic experience—though Americans may find themselves wondering how such terrific children can grow into such irritating adults.



*Diane Lane and Raoul Bova in an Italian idyll.*

ERIC PALMA

Waiting for Woody Allen's movies to return to form has become steady work. It doesn't help very much to say that "Anything Else" is better than his last two feature films, "Curse of the Jade Scorpion" and "Hollywood Ending," because it's still not very interesting. Allen's hero, Falk (Jason Biggs), a young New Yorker who wants to be a comedy writer, is saddled with a couple of killing relationships: his agent (Danny DeVito) doesn't find him much work yet makes him feel horribly guilty, and his girlfriend, Amanda (Christina Ricci), is a hapless liar and a narcissist. When Falk's not fencing miserably with these two, he takes long walks in Central Park to discuss his prospects and his troubles with Dobel, a teacher who is also a would-be comedy writer, played by Allen. Dobel, who's as full of advice as Nestor and Polonius combined, is meant to be a cranky Jewish paranoid with a violent streak, but he's also a kind of cockeyed good fairy. As he talks and Falk listens, the camera moves fluently through the Park. The rest of the movie, however, feels like a pointlessly nagging play. As people barge in and out of Falk's apartment, crowding against each other in a statically photographed set, I kept looking for the proscenium. Stockard Channing shows up as Amanda's selfish mother, and her character has the kind of brassy, blatantly self-serving lines that cause the audience to applaud her entrances. We wait for some sort of fiction to take hold or a character to develop, but young Falk is so bland and accommodating that he hardly seems worth putting at the center of a movie, and Amanda never changes from one duplicitous moment to the next. Having directed thirty-three theatrical features in about the same number of years, Woody Allen appears to be terrified of not working. But most of his recent movies lack the many, and the many different kinds of, good ideas that went into "Bananas" and "Annie Hall" and "Crimes and Misdemeanors" and "Husbands and Wives." ♦

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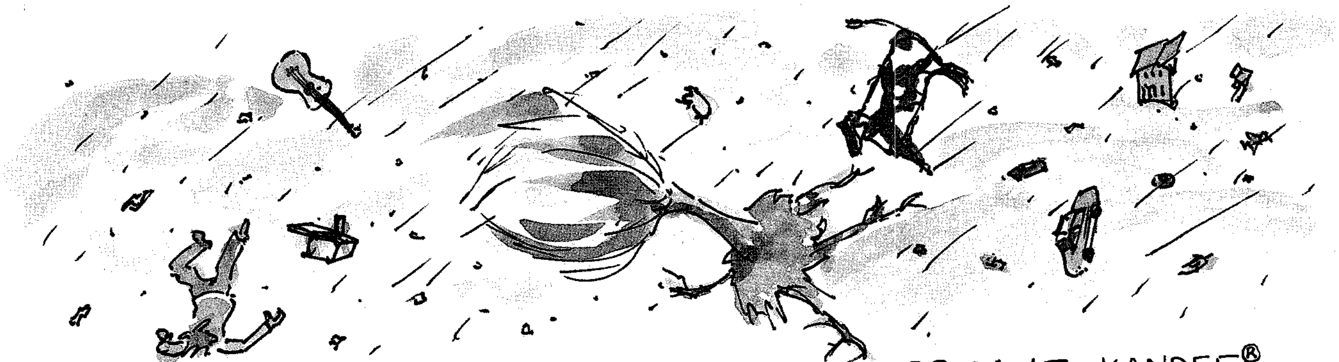

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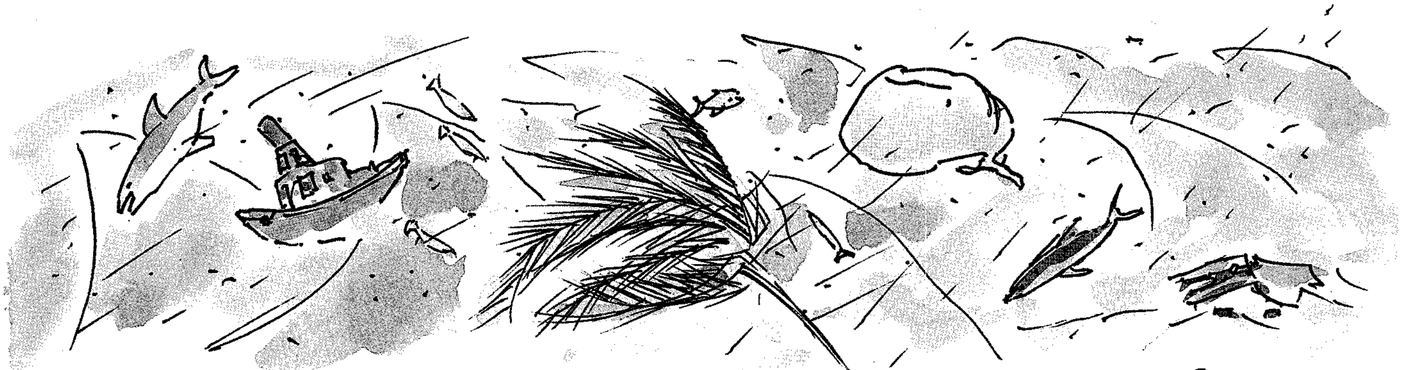

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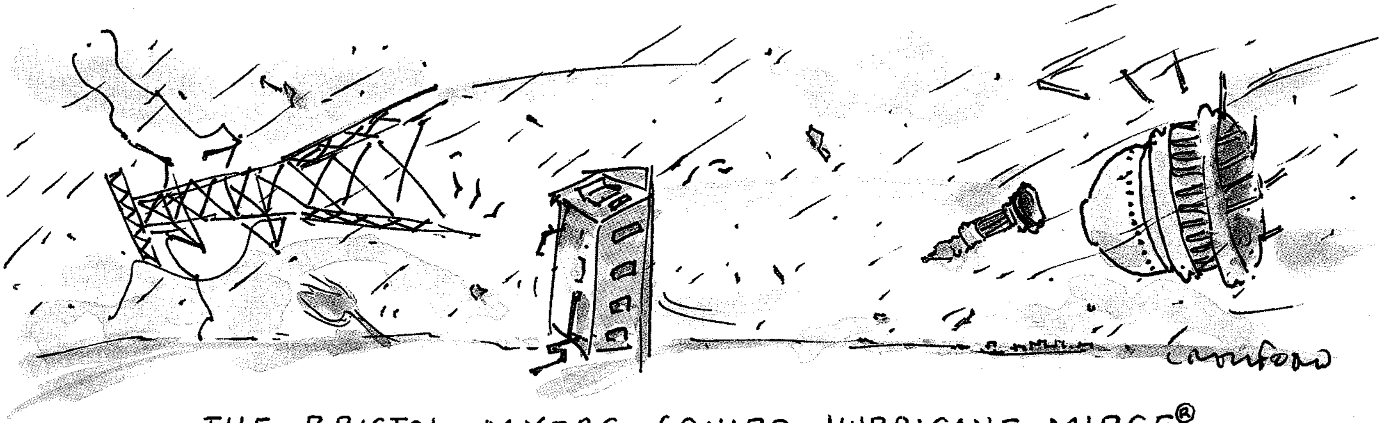

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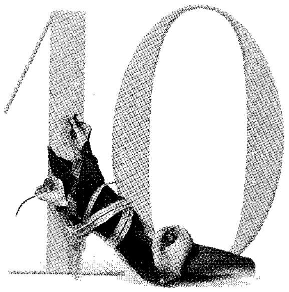

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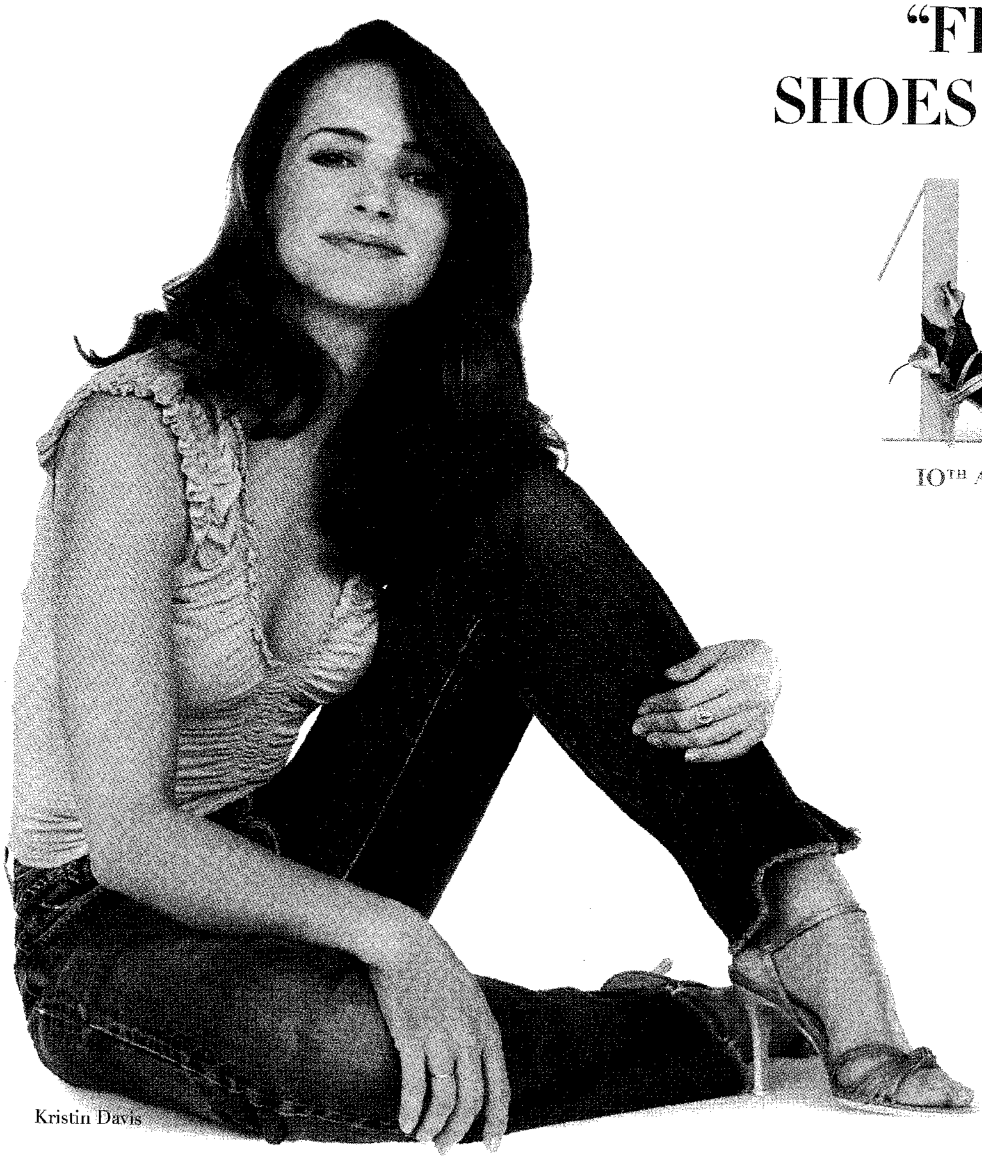

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